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KATHLEEN AT HOME

LITTLE PEOPLE EVERYWHERE

KATHLEEN IN IRELAND

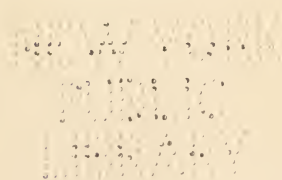
BY ETTA BLAISDELL McDONALD

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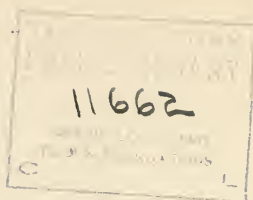
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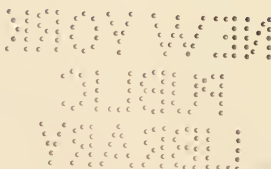


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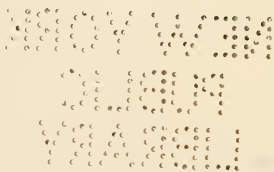
PREFACE

THERE is surely no country in the world where hearts so thinly covered beat so warmly as in the Emerald Isle. Wherever one travels,—over the bare mountains of Donegal and the rocks and cliffs of the northern coast, or among the blue lakes and green fields of the South,—he will always find a merry greeting and a hearty Irish welcome. The boys and girls have a smile and a cheerful word for every wind that blows; and that day is a rare one, indeed, which is not sunny with laughter and singing, even while clouds hide the blue sky and Irish rains are falling.

The wonder is that Irish boys and girls can find it in their hearts to leave their beautiful, loving land of the shamrock. So many fairy lakes were never found in any other country. Green meadows never offered sweeter resting-places than those of the Emerald Isle; yet its young people turn their backs to it, and their blue eyes toward the more barren worlds beyond the seas.

This story of Irish Kathleen gives glimpses of ancient Ireland, as well as pictures of the life of to-day with its tales of wee folk and giants, its picnics and turf-cutting, its dancing and sheep-shearing, its hunting and farming.

Kathleen lives first with her father up among the mountains of lonely Donegal; she goes with her little sister to spend a summer in County Sligo, and she lives a year with her ten cousins, the Malones of old Kilkenny, and a jolly, rollicking brood she finds them. She learns something of the history of Ireland from her father, and hears the story of the life of the good Saint Patrick; but she enjoys also the Gaelic tales which her grandmother tells her about the fairies, and the story of Finn MacCool, which she hears when she goes with her uncle to see the Giant's Causeway.



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KATHLEEN IN IRELAND

CHAPTER I

THE SHOEMAKER OF DONEGAL

"TELL me the story again, Kathleen."

"I can't tell it to you here, Mary Ellen," whispered her sister. "Sure, he might be under the hedge this minute and hear me talking about him. Come to the top of the hill and I'll tell you."

Mary Ellen slipped her hand into Kathleen's, and the two children stole softly away from the door-stone where they had been playing. Their bare feet made no sound on the green grass, and the old grandmother, who was spinning at the door of the cottage, did not even look up as they passed.

A thick fuchsia hedge bordered the plot of green grass that surrounded the cottage, shutting out the barren field behind the house. Slipping through the hedge, the little girls followed the narrow foot-path that led across the field to the top of the hill.

"I'm thinkin' of a riddle Danny gave me the morn'," said Kathleen, as they ran along the path.

"Give it to me," said Mary Ellen eagerly, and Kathleen laughed merrily as she repeated:

"From house to house it goes,
A wanderer small and slight;
And whether it rains or snows,
It sleeps outside in the night."

"I'll never guess it; tell it to me now, alanna," begged her sister.

"If your blue eyes could see the little *path* under your feet you would *see* the answer," replied Kathleen, as she led the blind child carefully over the steep pathway to the long stone slab where they loved to play. "We'll sit here a bit," she added, and drew Mary Ellen down beside her on the stone.

"Now tell me why you put the dish of stirabout under the hawthorn bush last night, and what became of it," asked the child, who could wait no longer for the story.

"It was for the leprecaun," Kathleen told her. "He is the fairy shoemaker, and he sits under the hedge all day tapping away on an old shoe. He wears a scarlet cap and a green coat, and there are two rows of buttons on his coat, with seven buttons in each row. He has a fairy purse which is filled with gold, and he puts it down beside him on the grass while he works; but he is always watching it. If I could just see him once and hold his eye

for a minute, I could snatch the purse of gold and run away with it."

"Did you ever see him?" whispered Mary Ellen.

"No," replied her sister; "but I have heard him tapping on his shoe many a time. Once I saw his scarlet cap under the hedge, but when I knelt down to look closer he threw sand in my eyes, as he always does, and was gone in a winkin'."

"Belike it was a humming-bird," said Mary Ellen.

"Danny says the hedge is full of their nests. But what would you do with the purse, Kathleen dear?"

Kathleen's eyes filled with tears and she looked at her sister with a sad face. "Oh, darlin', it's for you," she said, "to give you the sight in your pretty blue eyes. I'm thinkin' of it all the time, and faith, some day I'll find a way. That's why I took the dish of oaten stirabout and put it under the hawthorn bush last night, and why I put the bowl of milk on the window ledge. It's for the 'good people,' so that they'll know we take thought of them."

"Did the 'good people' drink the milk?" asked the blind child eagerly.

"No, Mary Ellen," said her sister, "but, listen! The stirabout was gone this morning, dish and all. The leprecaun must have taken it. I shall watch for him the night, and if I do catch the old shoemaker's eye, I'll hold it till he gives me his purse."

"I'm thinkin' that no one has ever held it yet,"

said Mary Ellen, snuggling against Kathleen's shoulder, as if there might be some danger in holding a fairy dwarf spellbound with the look of one's eye.

Kathleen lowered her voice and asked mysteriously, "Whist, Mary Ellen, do you mind old Granny Connor?"

"She that lives beyond the bog?" questioned Mary Ellen.

"Yes," said Kathleen.

"I mind that she lives all alone, and that the father tells us not to go near her," answered her sister. "She's too friendly with the fairies."

"Last night," said Kathleen, taking her sister's hand, and looking into her blue eyes while her own grew big and dark, "when I was driving the little cow home across the bog, who should I meet under the old oak tree but Granny Connor herself.

"I picked a bit of shamrock and held it tight in my hand, but she stopped me and made me talk to her, and she told me that it is our own father, himself, that has a purse from the leprecaun."

"I'll not believe it," said her sister quickly. "If he had, he'd not be making shoes all day by himself."

But Kathleen shook her head. "Granny Connor told me," she confided, "that he has made a bargain with the fairy dwarf, and must make shoes

all day long, or go wandering over the mountains a-tinkerin'."

"What's that you're saying, Kathleen?" a voice behind them asked suddenly, and the children jumped up in surprise.

A man with a leather apron tied round his waist was standing beside the stone slab. It was hard to tell where he had come from so quickly, for there had been no sign of any one near when Kathleen climbed to the top of the hill.

"It is the father himself," said Mary Ellen.

The shoemaker seated himself on the big stone and drew his little daughters down beside him; but it was such an unusual thing for him to spare any time from his work that they sat awkwardly within the shelter of his arms, waiting for him to speak.

Kathleen wondered how much of their talk he had heard, and whether he would scold her for listening to old Granny Connor, and repeating the tales to her little sister. She hung her head in silence, and Mary Ellen felt as if the sunshine had been darkened by a cloud; but the father's arms were around both little girls to hold them, although he did not speak for some time.

"So you have been listening to old Granny Connor," he said at last.

Kathleen stole a look into his face, which always had a kindly smile for everyone. "I did not mean

any wrong," she said timidly. "I was only wanting to find some way to help Mary Ellen."

"What would you be doing for Mary Ellen?" he asked.

"I'd like to find some way to get money so that she might go to Dublin and have a doctor cure her eyes," said the child simply.

"And so you put a dish of stirabout where the little old shoemaker might see it?" asked her father.

Both the children nodded their heads.

"How did you find out about the fairy dwarf?"

"Great-grandmother Connell and Grandmother Barry talk about him in Gaelic. Sometimes Grandmother Barry tells us what they are saying," answered Kathleen. "And last night I asked old Granny Connor to tell me more."

"What did she say?" asked her father.

"She said that people call you the leprecaun of Donegal, because of the two rows of buttons in sevens on your green frieze coat."

The shoemaker laughed. "And where do they think I keep my money?" he asked.

"They say you have it hidden in a purse that can never grow empty, and that you keep it in the place where you mend your shoes," the child replied, looking away from her father and off across the bog to the purple mountains. "And no one knows where

it is that you have your work-bench," she added with a sigh.

"Look at me, Kathleen," said her father.

The child turned her gray eyes up to his, gray and honest like her own.

"Did you think when you put the dish of stir-about under the hawthorn bush last night, that you would see me take it up?"

"Oh, no, no!" cried Kathleen. "Sure, I thought it would be the tiny man, himself, who would find it."

"But it was myself who found it and took it away, when you were sound asleep in your bed," said her father.

Kathleen jumped up in surprise, but Mary Ellen nodded her curly head, as if she knew all the time that it was not the fairy.

"I saw Granny Connor's red cloak bobbing across the bog last night, as I stood at my bench mending an old shoe," her father continued, "and I watched you stop under the oak tree to talk with her. When I found the dish of stirabout under the hawthorn bush I knew it was time for me to put an end to these foolish notions about the good people, and tell you the true words about Ireland's brave men and women. You should be learning about Brian Boru, who drove the Danes out of Ireland, and Daniel O'Connell, the greatest orator ever born on Irish

soil. Those are the men for you to be thinking of, instead of the leprecaun."

Kathleen looked at him earnestly. "It's not one word I'm believin' of all they say about you, Father," she said.

"It is what they say about the fairy people that's not for you to believe," he answered, and rising from the stone slab, he took a hand of each of the children and led them across the top of the hill to a grassy mound which was encircled by a ring of jagged rocks.

CHAPTER II

IN THE FAIRY RATH

"OH, Mary Ellen, it's the fairy rath," said Kathleen under her breath, and she clasped her father's hand more tightly.

Grandmother Barry, who talked often in Gaelic about the fairies with Great-grandmother Connell, had told the children many times not to play too near the fairy rath.

"There be many such mounds scattered over the hills and glens of ould Ireland," she said. "The good people live in them and may do harm to childer that make too bold with their haunts."

"They must be bad people if they would do harm to little Mary Ellen," Kathleen replied.

"Hush, child!" her grandmother reproved her. "They are like all men and women, liker to *do* good if they be called good."

Now, as they drew near the fairy rath, Kathleen tiptoed over the rocky path, thinking every moment to see a fairy slip behind a pebble or a blade of grass. She felt sure that when they stepped within the rocky ring, a door would open in the grassy

mound and show to her eager eyes long rooms glittering with jewelled walls, leading one after another into the depths of the earth.

What was her surprise then, when they entered the enclosure, to find, not a magic door leading to fairyland but a single tiny room dug out of the mound, sheltered from wind and rain by sods and stones, with just room enough for a man to work at his bench, and no more.

Her father pointed out to the child's disappointed eyes a leather pouch lying among the tools on the work-bench.

"That is the only purse I've got, Kathleen," he said, "and my fingers have never seen the magic day when they could fill it with silver."

Poor Mary Ellen's blind eyes could see nothing of the shoemaker's bench and the empty purse, but her heart felt all the loving thought that moved her sister to ask, "Then why did you not leave the dish of stirabout under the hawthorn bush? The little elf shoemaker sits there every night mending his shoe, with his purse of gold beside him. Belike you might snatch it yourself."

"Oh, Kathleen, it's myself will be the only shoemaker in these parts," her father answered. "Put the foolish fancies out of your head now. No good ever came of such thoughts."

It was not the first time he had told Kathleen to

forget the fairy lore, and he had often checked Grandmother Barry when her unruly tongue touched upon the forbidden subject. "The childer's heads should not be filled with such nonsense," he said.

But it was not easy to check Great-grandmother Connell. She had lived ninety long years among a fairy-loving people, and liked to tell the Gaelic stories of old Ireland over and over again.

She it was who believed that Ireland was first inhabited by a race of giants. "They lived here with the birds and beasts before ever a man rode through the green forests," she told Grandmother Barry.

"What became of them, then?" inquired her daughter.

"Sure, they turned themselves into the wee folk when men came here from over the seas, and they live under the rocks and trees and in the fairy mounds."

"True it is," agreed Grandmother Barry, and she told Kathleen what the great-grandmother had been saying in Gaelic about the giants and fairies.

That was how Kathleen came to know so many of the tales of old Ireland, and why she was always thinking of the wee folk.

"How can I put the thoughts out of my head?" she asked her father. "Sure, the fairies are putting them in again all the time, with their doings."

"What are they doing, the day, to make you think of them?" asked the shoemaker.

"There's the ring of green grass beyond the hawthorn bush," she said timidly. "Danny borrowed the plow from Farmer Flynn and plowed through it over and over, but it came up again as round and green as ever. What else could make it but the fairies with their dancing feet?"

The shoemaker shook his head hopelessly at the child's simple faith in her old grandmother's stories. "It's not like you, with your sense and handy ways about the house, to believe the fairy nonsense," he said. "It must be because you have never learned the reading. After this you must come up here when your work in the house is done, and I'll teach you the words. If you don't believe it from my telling, you will from the books, that there are no fairies in Ireland."

So it came about that on sunny afternoons through the winter two little girls played on the top of the hill near a fairy rath in far Donegal, in the north of Ireland. And often the shoemaker put his work down on the bench and called the children to his side, where he told them true stories of Irish history, and taught Kathleen to read from the pages of an old Irish book.

CHAPTER III

THE OLD WOMAN IN RED

“How many miles to Dublin town?
Threescore and ten.
Can I get there by candle-light?
Yes, and back again!”

WITH the last words the two little girls clasped hands and ran round and round the great stone slab, not hearing their father's voice calling to them from his bench.

As the children dropped upon the stone he called more sharply, “Kathleen! Do you hear me?”

“I hear you, but I do not fear you,” answered Kathleen, leading Mary Ellen to her father's side. She put her arm around his neck and kissed his patient face, then seated herself on his knee.

“I used to fear you,” she said with a laugh, “after Granny Connor told me you had made a bargain with the leprecaun, and that you had a secret hiding-place.”

“And now it's no secret at all, at all,” her father said. “The grandmother has learned it, too, and

will be calling you down to run errands the minute she lays eyes on you here."

"We were both helping her, the morn," said Mary Ellen.

"What were you doing, jewel?" asked the father of the little blind child.

"Oh, reddin' up the house," replied Mary Ellen. "Kathleen swept the floor, and I wiped the dishes, and then I held the yarn for Grandma Connell. She is knitting you some stockings."

"Yes," added Kathleen, "and I drove the little dun cow to the pasture beyond the bog; and on my way home I pulled some rushes to make a new brush for the hearth."

"I helped Grandma Barry with the churning, too," said Mary Ellen. "We churned and churned, but not a bit of butter did we get till Kathleen came home and put a sod of burning peat under the churn. Then the butter came soon enough, and Kathleen said the good people had put a spell upon the cream."

"Faith, you're always thinking of the fairies," exclaimed her father. "Do you like old Granny Connor's witch tales better than the stories I tell you of brave Irish men, like Brian Boru and Conn of the Hundred Battles?"

Kathleen looked at him quickly. "You tell us that Conn lived many hundred years ago, and Brian

Boru has been dead these eight hundred years; but Granny Connor says that the fairies are living now. They have a council hall in a cave between here and Letterkenny. The cave is under the great Rock of Doon, and — ”

“ I like not to hear you speak so much of old Granny Connor and her tales,” her father interrupted her. “ It’s her and her red cloak have put sorrow and shame on me these many years. ”

“ Do you mind how green the grass is already, down there in front of the door, Kathleen, child? ” he added.

“ Yes,” she said. “ I’m fond of the feeling of it to my bare feet.”

“ You might travel over the whole of Donegal without seeing another yard so green,” he said sadly, “ and it’s a shame to me to have it so.”

“ Why? ” asked Mary Ellen, who thought the soft grass the best playground in the whole world.

“ Because no stranger ever stops before our door to beg a bite or a night’s shelter from us,” he replied.

“ True it is,” said the child, “ but Grandma Barry says it is lonely here and no one cares to come.”

“ I mind it is because Granny Connor put the curse upon me years ago, when first I came here,” her father repeated. “ She said, ‘ May the grass be always green before your door,’ and green it has been ever since.”

"But why should that be a curse?" asked Kathleen.

"Because Ireland is the kindest country under the sun," he answered. "Open house and open heart is our motto, and if a yard is green, 't is because no friendly foot has worn it bare."

Kathleen's cheeks flushed. "Danny and I will dig up every blade of grass before we sleep the night," she declared.

"Whist," said her father. "It is as it is. But it might have been different if I had said the kind word to the old woman in red when I brought your mother to these parts years gone."

"What did she do?" asked Mary Ellen, taking her father's big hand in her two little ones and holding it fast.

"We were just after lighting the first sod of peat on the hearth, when Granny Connor stood at the door, dressed all in her red cloak, and so still that no one had heard her step. 'T is a haunted country that you 've come to,' she said, and it frightened your mother to hear her.

"There were the three of you children, and Mary Ellen but a wee baby. Your mother was ailing, and I was angered at the old woman's tongue. 'Be off with your crazy talk!' I said, seeing that your mother was scared, and Granny went away across the bog, but first she said the curse."

"I wouldn't have bided here after that," said Kathleen, but her father shook his head.

"I had worked a long time to build the little cottage and get it dry-thatched," he said, "and I had a fine flock of sheep to pasture on the hillside. But the mother was lonely and fearsome after Granny Connor's visit, and she pined away and died."

The children nestled closer to his side to comfort him, and he put a hand on each little head, — Kathleen's dark and straight-haired, Mary Ellen's yellow and curly.

"Then I sent into County Sligo for your two grandmothers to come and bide," he went on, "and soon I had to do something else to earn a living, because the sheep fell sick and died in the pasture."

"What did you do?" questioned Mary Ellen.

"I went over the mountains a-tinkering," replied her father. "But your mother used to say that bad luck follows those that have no steady biding-place, and so it was for me. Wherever I went there was a whisper that I was like to have trouble for company, and faith, in those days he seemed my best friend."

"Grandma Barry says to look trouble in the eye and he'll turn away," said Kathleen.

"Sure I've seen no more of him since Danny got big enough to lend a hand," said her father.

"Danny's the good lad and will do a hand's turn of work with the best of them."

"'T is Danny that keeps the house dry-thatched," said Kathleen, looking down at the brown-thatched, white-walled cottage at the foot of the hill.

"'T is Kathleen that reds up the house and helps the two grandmothers," suggested Mary Ellen.

"She's a fine slip of a girl," replied her father heartily, "and you too, Molly jewel; there's a pair of ye."

CHAPTER IV

ERIN'S HARP

MARCH winds blew across the valley and ruffled Mary Ellen's yellow curls as she sat in the ring of green grass made by the fairies' dancing feet, and played with some sea-shells and pebbles Danny had found in the seaweed he gathered for Farmer Flynn.

She had been playing contentedly for a long time when she suddenly jumped up, scattering a handful of pebbles from her lap. "Kathleen," she called, "I hear the peddler's cart. Sure, he's comin' across the bridge this minute."

Kathleen rushed out of the house, clasped her sister's hand tightly in her own, and ran up the little path to the top of the hill as fast as she could go.

"Oh, Mary Ellen!" she panted; "I made sure I'd finish the stockings before the peddler came this way again; but here he is now and only one done. The blue dress will be worn out before the other stocking's finished."

The peddler drew up his cart before the door of the little cottage, and Grandmother Barry went out

to bargain with him for a piece of linen in exchange for her butter and eggs. Great-grandmother Connell hobbled out to see that the bargain was well made, and the three laughed heartily over Kathleen's hurried flight.

In the winter the peddler had given the child a piece of blue homespun for a dress, and she had promised to knit a pair of stockings for him in payment; but there were so many more interesting things to do every day that the knitting proved slow work, and Kathleen had often wished the blue dress back in the peddler's cart.

"Faith, Kathleen makes it harder work to keep out of my sight than to do the knitting," the peddler said, as he opened his cart and took out the linen.

Grandmother Barry laughed as she answered, "I'm thinkin' it will teach the child a good lesson. It's best to keep well out of debt, and a dress is better paid for before it is worn. But she shall finish the stockings this day week, or I'll knit them myself."

She went into the house to fetch her butter and eggs, and after much weighing and measuring and talking, they were exchanged for a piece of coarse linen and a pound of good honey.

In the meantime the two little girls hid behind the fairy rath and whispered together about the stockings.



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THE HILLS OF DONEGAL

The road over which Danny brought the seaweed for Farmer Flynn. *Page 21*

"The minute the peddler drives down the road I'll go and get the knitting, and I'll keep the needles clickin' while I'm out of my bed till it's done," Kathleen declared.

Mary Ellen held up her hand. "Whist, alanna," she said softly, "'t is fairy music I hear."

Kathleen listened eagerly for a moment. "True for you," she said. "I hear it myself. Belike it's the sea-gods over at Horn Head. There was a big storm last night, and Grandmother Barry says that after a big storm thousands of the sea-gods ride over the waves on their white-maned steeds winding their battle horns."

It is ten miles across the country to Horn Head, which is one of the rocky headlands on the north coast of Ireland, where the waves of the Atlantic Ocean beat against the dark cliffs. Highland lakes and mountain rivers lie between, and the road over which Danny brought the seaweed for Farmer Flynn leads across purple hills that would surely deaden the sound of surf miles away.

"It's nearer than Horn Head," said Mary Ellen. "There may be fairies in the rath after all."

"Let's go and see," Kathleen suggested, and the two children tiptoed carefully around the circle of rocks, forgetting all about the peddler, and the stockings, and Kathleen's good resolution.

As they crept softly up to the open door of the

grassy mound the sweet notes became a little tune, and a voice began singing the familiar words of an old Irish song.

Kathleen stood still, hardly daring to breathe, but Mary Ellen stepped boldly into the tiny room. "It's the father himself," she said, and Kathleen followed her sister, astonished indeed to find her father sitting on his work-bench and gently touching the strings of a small harp.

"I'm glad it was n't the fairy music we heard," she said, after the surprise was over. "Grandma Barry says a spell is cast over him that hears it, and after the spell is taken off he pines away and dies in a year and a day."

"Is it your own harp, Father?" asked Mary Ellen, thinking he might perhaps have borrowed it from the fairies.

"It was your mother's," he answered. "It was in her family from the days of the old Irish chiefs, and she showed me how to pick the strings."

Mary Ellen touched it softly with her fingers. "It almost seems alive," she said, as the strings gave out their sweet sounds.

"There was once a god in Ireland who owned a harp that was alive," her father said with a smile. "He used to be called the 'Mighty Father of Ireland,' and his harp could do strange things when it had a mind. Sometimes he would go to the top

of the mountain and play the whole procession of the seasons — spring, summer, autumn, winter — out of the strings of the harp.

“Once the god was captured by the giants, and was taken away to their castle, but he called to his harp for help, and it heard and answered. It flew through the air straight to its master, and killed nine of the giants as it flew.”

“Listen to him, telling us tales of the giants,” whispered Kathleen, but Mary Ellen was thinking of the harp and paid no attention to her sister.

“Danny says there is a harp on the green flag of Ireland,” she said.

“Yes,” said her father, “it was an Irish god who made the harp and played upon its strings.”

“Tell us about it,” begged Kathleen, who loved the gods and giants as well as she did the fairies.

“The god’s name was Dagda,” her father told her, “and once when he was walking beside a blue lake he saw a beautiful maiden and wished to have her for his wife. But the maiden feared him and ran away through the forest.

“Dagda followed her and she went on running away; and so at last they came to a beautiful curving beach, with the waves washing the yellow sands.

“As the maiden fled swiftly across the wet sands she heard a strange, mournful sound, and stopped to listen to the music.

"The bones of a fish lay on the sand at her feet, and the dry skin, stretched from rib to rib, made a harp for the wind to play upon.

"When Dagda saw that the sweet sounds pleased the maiden, he took a piece of wood and made a harp after the same pattern, playing upon the strings with his fingers as the wind had taught him to do. After that the maiden followed him gladly for love of the music.

"It was the first music ever heard in all Ireland, but since that day we have had harpers from one end of the land to the other. 'Tis a wonderful country for music, and we put the harp on our green flag to show that we're proud of the sweet songs of Erin."

Kathleen sighed when the story was finished. "I wish it were the days of gods and giants and beautiful maidens now," she said.

"I'd wish for the days of the harpers and storytellers," said Mary Ellen wistfully.

"Right you are, Molly jewel," said her father, putting the harp carefully away in its case. "The giants were just plain men like myself, but with no learning at all, at all. Faith, they could neither read nor write, and but for the harpers we'd know nothing about them."

"How do we know from the harpers?" asked Kathleen.

"Sure, the harpers and story-tellers made up grand songs and stories about the gods and the giants of old Ireland, and travelled up and down the length and breadth of the land singing their songs and telling their stories wherever they went. It was the only way of learning that people had in the days when there were no books."

"The people must have been glad to see the harpers coming," said Mary Ellen, thinking how much she would like to hear their songs.

"That they were," replied her father. "Even the kings made them welcome, and gave great feasts in their honor. The feasts were held in a long banquet hall with rows of tables up and down the sides, and there were sometimes more than a hundred men at the tables. The king sat at the head of the hall, with a harper on one side and a story-teller on the other, and there was merry-making through half the night."

"Those old kings of Ireland must have been great men," said Kathleen.

"That they were," replied her father, "and Brian Boru was the best of them all."

"The grandmother is callin'," interrupted Mary Ellen. "I hear the sound of her bell."

"She's always callin'," Kathleen complained, but she took her sister's hand and hurried obediently down the hill.

CHAPTER V

THE LITTLE GREEN SHAMROCK

"LOOK, Kathleen," said Grandmother Barry, as the two children reached the cottage door, "there's not another sod of peat in the house. Run down to Farmer Flynn's to meet Danny, and tell him to bring some home with him."

"I'll get the small creel Danny made for me, and bring some home myself," said Kathleen, running into the cottage.

She was out again in a moment with two light wicker baskets. "Here's your creel, too, Mary Ellen," she said, and hung it carefully over her sister's shoulders.

Farmer Flynn lived a mile away on a big sheep farm, and Kathleen was glad to be sent there for peat. She liked the work and bustle of the farm life and always saw something new and interesting. Sometimes there were baby lambs in the sheepfold, sometimes she saw a calf or a pair of young donkeys, and then, best of all, there was the big flock of white geese that belonged to the farmer's wife.

Kathleen loved to watch the geese, and she often

told Mary Ellen funny stories about them and their strange ways. "I'm going to ask Mrs. Flynn to let me tend them for her next summer," she had confided to her sister. "That will be one way to earn pennies for your eyes, darlin'."

Danny had worked for the farmer ever since the winter his father had brought them all to live in Donegal. He had been a pale, shy little lad at first, but now he was grown strong and sturdy, "able to do a day's work with the best of them," he said proudly.

Farmer Flynn was proud of him, too, and often said, "I made of Dan Barry the man that he is. He can thatch a roof or shear a sheep to-day as well as I can myself."

And whenever little Kathleen caught the farmer's eye she would stand straighter to hear him say, "There's a fine slip of a lass. She'll be a good woman and a pride to you, Danny my boy."

The two children, with their creels on their backs, ran down the little lane behind the house, followed the brook which chattered over the rocks at the foot of the heather glen, crossed the bog and climbed the hill, and then, at a quick turn of the path, there they were at the peat-shed, and there was Danny standing at the door.

He was talking with a strange man who carried a bundle of blackthorn sticks on his back; but just

as the little girls came around the corner Danny shook his head and turned to go into the shed.

"Oh, Mary Ellen," said Kathleen, "there's a peddler and he's trying to sell Danny a shillalah."

"He'll not do it," said Mary Ellen. "Sure, Danny's saving every odd shilling he earns. He has them in an old stocking, and he shook them out and let me count them. He has near a pound."

"The peddler has a bundle of fine big sticks," said Kathleen, "but not one of them is as thick and strong as the blackthorn Father has from Great-grandfather Connell. I'm thinkin' Danny will have that some day."

The peddler smiled pleasantly at the two little girls as they drew nearer, and put his hand so gently on Mary Ellen's curly head that Kathleen took a liking to him at once.

"Where's your bit of green ribbon?" he asked with a laugh, looking at the blue homespun dresses as if he thought they ought to be trimmed with green.

Kathleen looked up into her brother's face to see if he knew what the stranger meant by the question.

Before Danny could tell her the peddler added, "Mayhap you never heard of our good St. Patrick in these parts," and he laughed again as if he thought this question a better joke than the other.

"We know St. Patrick well," said Kathleen. "It's not more than a day's journey from here to his mountain in County Mayo, where he drove all the snakes out of Ireland into the sea."

"Then you should be wearing the green for him this day," said the peddler, and he showed proudly a big knot of green ribbon on one of the black-thorn sticks he carried, and a smaller knot on his worn coat. "Tell the truth now, that you clean forgot this is the seventeenth of March and St. Patrick's Day in the morning."

"Go away with you!" exclaimed Danny. "Where are your eyes, man? Don't you see the green in my cap?"

Ireland is often called the Emerald Isle because of its setting of green fields and hills, and the national color, which is green, is seen everywhere. The English flag floats over the public buildings, but on holidays and feast-days the green flag of Erin decorates the houses, and on St. Patrick's Day every one wears a bit of green in memory of the patron saint, and in honor of Ireland.

Danny, who had no green ribbon to wear to show his love for his country, had tucked a sprig of green shamrock into his cap, but now the tender leaves were wilted and hung drooping from their slender stems.

"It's St. Patrick's own little plant, and it was

fresh and green enough when I found it beside the brook this morning," he said, taking off his cap and touching the withered leaves tenderly as if he loved them.

"Come home with us now," he added, turning to the peddler, "and we'll give you a good Irish welcome and a bite and a sup."

"I'll gladly go with you and the childer here," said the peddler heartily. So he helped the little girls fill their creels with the sods of dry peat and fastened a bit of shamrock on their dresses "for St. Patrick and old Ireland." Danny finished up his work in a hurry, and soon they were all on their way back along the lonely path. But it was lonely no longer, for they sang as they marched along:

"There's a dear little plant that grows in our Isle,
'Twas Saint Patrick himself, sure, that set it;
And the sun on his labor with pleasure did smile,
And with dew from his eye often wet it.
It shines thro' the bog, thro' the brake, and the mireland,
And he called it the dear little shamrock of Ireland.
The dear little shamrock,
The sweet little shamrock,
The dear little, sweet little, shamrock of Ireland.

CHAPTER VI

GOOD ST. PATRICK

GRANDMOTHER BARRY heard the song, and went to the door to see who was singing it so heartily. When she saw the peddler with the children she hurried to put an extra bowl and plate on the table, and bustled about the room setting out the simple meal.

The potatoes were baking in the embers, the kettle was boiling cheerfully over the burning peat, and a big dish of oaten stirabout was already steaming on the table.

"I'll make a good cup of tay, and we'll have a supper fit for the king," Grandmother Barry said aloud to herself, as she measured out the tea carefully and poured the boiling water over it. Then she went again to the door to give the stranger a hearty welcome.

Kathleen rang the bell to call her father down from his work-bench, Danny milked the little cow, and "in just no time at all" they were ready for supper.

"'T is a sin and a shame that Kathleen is not wearing her green dress for St. Patrick," said Grandmother Barry, as she saw the knot of green ribbon in the peddler's coat. "I put it on her to wear to Mass, but 't is her best and not to be worn common when she's here at home. 'T was a grand morning, and Father Burke gave the children a good talk about St. Patrick."

"A fine morning it was, woman dear," said the peddler, "and a grand day for the best saint that ever lived in ould Ireland.

"Tell us what Father Burke said about him," he added, turning to Kathleen.

Poor Kathleen flushed and hung her head. "Sure, I know he stood on Croagh Patrick, over in County Mayo, and drove all the snakes out of the whole country into the sea," she said, wishing she could remember some of the stories the good priest had told them.

"I'm not so sure about that," said the peddler; "but it is true that there is not one to be found in the whole island. Some say there was never a snake here, and some say the good saint drove them all out with one stroke of his big stick. However it is, he is the best saint that ever lived, and a glory to Ireland, praise be to him!"

"Father Burke says he was only a lad when he was stolen away from his father and mother in

Scotland, and brought to Ireland to tend swine for one of the chiefs," said Mary Ellen shyly.

"He was sixteen years old, and as straight and handsome a lad as ever lived," said the peddler.

"Was he a saint then?" asked Kathleen.

"Whist, child," exclaimed Grandmother Barry, "would a saint tend wild pigs on the mountains for any man, chief or no chief?"

"He was a brave lad," repeated the peddler. "It should be told oftener how he served one of the chiefs for six long years, and served him well. He set a good example to the flighty gossoons nowadays that can't stick to one thing for as long as a month at a time."

"Danny has worked for Farmer Flynn ten years," said Mary Ellen, fearing the peddler might think her brother a "flighty gossoon."

"Father Burke said that St. Patrick went all over Ireland, ringing his bell and preaching to the people," said Kathleen, beginning to remember some of the story.

"So he did; he was a wonderful preacher," said Grandmother Barry, "and he was Bishop of all Ireland for many years."

"Was that when Great-grandmother Connell was a little girl?" asked Mary Ellen, who thought her great-grandmother very old.

"Whist, jewel; it was nearly fifteen hundred

years ago that St. Patrick died," her father told her, "and your great-grandmother's only ninety."

"Tell us the story of St. Patrick," begged Kathleen. "I'll remember it this time, for sure."

"Well, now," the peddler began, "when Patrick was a lad of sixteen he was brought to Ireland and sold as a slave to one of the rich chiefs, who sent him to tend swine on the mountains. At first he was no doubt sad and lonely, but he bore his troubles bravely and thought often of the good Father in Heaven."

Kathleen's father rose quickly, and going to a box in the corner of the room, he took out a book and brought it back to the fire.

"This is what the good saint himself wrote about those lonely days in the mountains," he said, and turning the page he began to read slowly: "I was daily employed tending flocks; and I prayed frequently during the day, and the love of God was more and more enkindled in my heart, my fear and faith were increased, and my spirit was stirred; so much so that in a single day I poured out my prayers a hundred times and nearly as often in the night. Nay, even in the woods and mountains I remained, and rose before the dawn to my prayer, in frost and snow and rain; neither did I suffer any injury from it; for the spirit of the Lord was fervent within me."

"He was a good lad," said Grandmother Barry, wiping a tear from her wrinkled cheek, and taking up her knitting again.

"That he was, praise be to him," the peddler agreed. "He tended the swine for six years, and then he escaped and made his way back to his home in Scotland; but he could not forget the Irish people and he longed to go back and teach them to be Christians. He studied for many years in France and other countries, but all the time his thoughts turned back to Ireland and he had dreams and visions about it.

"At last the Pope gave his permission, and Patrick set out for Ireland, landing on the north coast, in what is now County Down. Dicho, the chief of the district, thought that Patrick and his companions were pirates, and went to meet them and drive them out of the country; but when he saw their calm and peaceful ways he saluted them and invited them to his castle.

"Here Patrick told the chief his story and explained his belief in God, and Dicho and his whole family became Christians and were baptized."

"He was a wonderful preacher," repeated Grandmother Barry, with a nod of her head.

"Father Burke says that no missionary, since the time of the apostles, ever preached the gospel with more success than St. Patrick," said Danny.

"That was because he cared nothing for riches and honor," said the peddler. "He loved the people of Ireland and longed to make them all good Christians.

"After living with Dicho for some time and converting all the people roundabout, he bade good-bye to his friends and sailed down to the mouth of the river Boyne. From there he walked to the Hill of Tara, where the high-king of all Ireland lived in a great palace.

"He arrived at the palace on Easter morning, and presented himself before the king and his court. Patrick was robed in white, as were also his companions, and he wore his mitre and carried his crosier in his hand. He converted many of the king's followers, and preached to the people throughout all the king's dominions.

"'T was so all over Ireland, — wherever Patrick went he turned pagans to Christians and built churches.

"He died in the very place where he first preached to Dicho, on the seventeenth day of March, about the year 465."

"Is that why we call the seventeenth of March St. Patrick's Day?" asked Mary Ellen.

"Yes," replied her father, "it is the day that he died. We don't rightly know just what day he was born."

"How do you know so many things about St. Patrick, then, if he lived so many hundred years ago?" asked Kathleen.

"The old books tell us," her father said. "Patrick, himself, wrote about his wanderings, and the monks copied these books and many others, painting pictures on the pages to illustrate them. It is from these ancient Gaelic books that we learn much about the life and customs of the people."

"There were books of laws for the kings and the people, too," said the peddler.

"Did the kings have to obey laws?" asked Kathleen, who supposed kings did just as they chose.

"That they did," replied the peddler. "There was a law that no man could rule at Tara who was not perfect in his looks; so when Cormac mac Art lost an eye he had to give up being king."

"'T was a shame, too, for he was a good king," said the father.

"It was also against the law for the sun to rise while the king was lying in bed at Tara," said the peddler.

The children laughed merrily, and Danny asked, "How could they keep the sun from rising till the king was out of his bed?"

"Faith, they made the king get up before the sun did," the peddler answered.

While the children were laughing over his joke,

Grandmother Barry put down her knitting and went to the cupboard for a plate of oat-cakes and her precious pound of honey.

Everyone was quiet for a few minutes over the feast, and little Mary Ellen was the first to break the silence. "Father told us a story about St. Columbkille one day," she said. "He was born here in our own Donegal and he had little cakes baked for him with the letters of the alphabet on them. I'm thinkin' if I had cakes like that I could learn the letters with my fingers."

"Faith, he must have had a fine time picnicking on his letters," said the peddler.

"There was St. Bridget, too," said Grandmother Barry; "she was a fine woman and took great pride in learning and teaching. And I doubt not her fingers had magic in them to turn wool into yarn and yarn into stockings, like any colleen of Donegal," she added, with a look at Kathleen.

But Kathleen was sound asleep in her chair and had forgotten all about the stocking she was going to finish knitting that very day.

"The child is tired out with our stories," said her father.

"I mind we should all be in our beds," said Grandmother Barry, and soon they were tucked away comfortably for the night.

CHAPTER VII

A RIDE WITH THE POSTMAN

“My blessing go high, my blessing go low,
My blessing go with you wherever you go.”

It was Mary Ellen's sweet Irish way of saying good-bye to the peddler when he went away the next day; and he replied heartily, “If I should travel over the whole of Ireland between sun-up and sun-down, I'd hear no better word.”

At the cross-roads he met the postman in his red jaunting-car, riding toward the thatched cottage at the foot of the hill, and he stopped to pass the time of day with him.

“Give the two little girls a ride,” said the peddler. “If 't is to the National School you are going, with a letter for the teacher, this way is as short as the other, and 't is a lonely life the two children lead,--a mile from any other house, and never another child to play with.”

“'T is a letter for Jerry, himself, that I have, and 't will take me by the cottage, anyway,” answered the postman; and looked the letter over,

thinking that it was probably from Grandmother Barry's daughter, Hannah Malone, as the postmark was "Kilkenny."

He found the great-grandmother crooning an old Gaelic milking tune over her wheel, instead of the spinning song which she usually sang; and Grandmother Barry greeted him with, "Ah, Larry O'Day, this is just such a morning as the one when you and I went with the rest on the pilgrimage to 'Tobar N'alt,' the holy well in County Sligo, to cure us of our rheumatism."

The postman laughed. "That was forty years ago, and I'd forgot all about it," he said, throwing out a letter from the pack. "It's a dozen pilgrimages to holy wells that I've made since then," he went on, "and there's not a heartier man for his age, than myself, in all Ireland."

Then he called to the children and asked if they cared to ride with him as far as the National School, four miles back of the hill, to carry a letter to the teacher.

"Oh, Molly darlin', a ride!" gasped Kathleen, hardly believing her ears; while Mary Ellen was so excited that she climbed over the seat and would have tumbled into the well of the jaunting-car if Kathleen had not held her back.

"Steady, there, steady!" said Larry O'Day. "There be all sorts of wells in holy Ireland, from

the blessed ones filled with the water that cures all ailments, to the empty one between the seats of a jaunting-car; but not a one is there built to hold little girls in red dresses."

Both children laughed merrily, and held tight to each other as the old horse jogged up hill and down dale toward the far-away schoolhouse.

The blue waters of a lake glistened afar off among the heather, and the postman said, "I mind me that somewhere in these parts there is a long flat stone that marks the place where the good Saint Columba was born. I've heard that if a body sleeps on it for one night before leaving dear old Ireland, he'll never be homesick."

"Perhaps 't is the same flat stone by Father's bench, where we play betimes," said Kathleen. "I'll tell Danny about it. He's thinking of going to find his fortune in America."

Then the children asked about the schoolhouse and the children who went to school in it. "How old are they?" asked Kathleen. "Are there any as little as Mary Ellen?"

"There are some smaller than Mary Ellen and some bigger than you," answered the postman. "There are both boys and girls."

"What do they learn?" she asked again, while Mary Ellen asked, "What do they play?"

"I've seen them playing some kind of a game

where they hold hands in a circle," he told Mary Ellen, and both little girls cried at once, "That's 'Green grow the rushes-O.'"

"Belike it is," he said cheerfully, and went on, "they learn reading, and writing, and the church catechism."

"Don't they learn about the grand places there are in the other parts of the world?" asked Kathleen wistfully. One of her few great pleasures was to get out an old geography-book belonging to her father, and study the pictures in it.

"Perhaps there's something of the sort for the older ones," said the postman, "but if a body can't travel the world over, to see such places, I'm doubtful if there's any good in learning about them."

"Oh, no, no!" cried Kathleen, aghast at such a thought; while Mary Ellen said softly, "If I could see just one little green shamrock, I'd walk to the end of the world."

Then they turned into another road and saw the children playing in the school-yard, and a sudden shyness fell upon Kathleen at the sight of so many children.

After the teacher had taken her letter and the red cart was jogging back over the road, there was no end to the questions Larry O'Day had to answer.

"Would those little girls feed the chickens and pigs, and drive the cow to pasture, as Kathleen did?"



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"THEY ARE PLAYING 'GREEN GROW THE RUSHES — O'"

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Would the boys plant potatoes and work in the bog just the same as Danny? Was that the very school where Danny himself walked eight miles a day, one winter, to learn to figure?"

Before they reached the thatched cottage again, the postman had talked more than he had for many a day before, and Kathleen helped her little sister down from the car in a great hurry to run to Grandmother Barry and ask still other questions.

But Grandmother Barry had questions of her own to ask. "Sure, Kathleen alanna," she began, "and how would you like to go down to Kilkenny and live with your Aunt Hannah?"

"When?" asked Kathleen breathlessly.

"As soon as the plans can be made," answered her grandmother. "Your Aunt Hannah has sent the word in the letter the postman left; and your father has gone to fetch Danny and talk it over with him."

"There they are now," said Mary Ellen, her quick ear catching the sound of their footsteps, and the next moment Danny and his father were turning into the yard.

Then Mary Ellen held the wonderful letter while Kathleen looked it over and Father Jerry told what it said.

"Himself has been doing well in his business, praise be!" Aunt Hannah wrote, "and I'd like to

do something for a child of my youngest brother, though he did take up with the tinker's trade against my wishes; and him with the schooling."

"That's true," said the shoemaker, looking up at the circle of faces. "Hannah begged me to take up teaching for a living. I had the learning for it, and it is an honorable calling in Ireland, and always has been. But I longed to see the whole of the green island, so I took on a trade that gave me a chance to travel over it."

"'Tis of the chair in the chimney-corner at Barney's house in Sligo, I've been thinking all the morn," said Great-grandmother Connell. "Do you believe Barney has kept it waiting for me these ten years as he said he would?"

"I doubt not there's a chair each side of the chimney, one for you and one for Mother Barry," said Father Jerry gently.

"'Tis Ireland that never forgets the old mother," said the older woman, "and my heart is crying out for the dear old home where I lived for eighty years."

"Why should n't we all go?" asked Danny boldly. "I've money enough for my passage to America, and I'd like to try my fortune in the world."

"But what will become of me?" asked little Mary Ellen.

"'Tis you and I will buy a great dog to keep

us company, and we'll go travelling together up north to listen to the waves beating around the Giant's Causeway, Molly darling," her father told her.

But Danny had to give a month's warning to Farmer Flynn, and before the time was up, a letter had reached them from Tonroe. It said that Cousin Bee, Uncle Barney's daughter who had married a Donovan, would be glad to have Mary Ellen bide with her for a while, at her home in Roscommon County.

"So you and the doggie must travel alone to the North," whispered Mary Ellen to her father.

And that was the way of it.

CHAPTER VIII

COUSIN BEE'S FARM IN TONROE

It was an April morning at Cousin Bee's little farm-house in Tonroe. The kettle was bubbling cheerfully over the burning peat in the fireplace; the cement floor of the kitchen was spotlessly clean; and Patrick, Bee's husband, was making the children feel quite at home as he talked with them about Donegal and laughed heartily over their little stories.

Danny, Kathleen and Mary Ellen had arrived at the station with the two grandmothers the night before, and nothing would do but they must all leave the train together.

"Sure, we've room and to spare for a strong lad like you," Patrick had told Danny; and Bee had said, "'T would be a shame for Mary Ellen and Kathleen to be separated so sudden-like."

So Uncle Barney took the two grandmothers home with him to Killaraght, while Danny and Kathleen went with Mary Ellen to visit Cousin Bee before going on with their journey,—Kathleen to Kilkenny, and Danny to Queenstown, where he was to take the steamer for America.



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COUSIN BEE'S FARMHOUSE IN TONROE
Notice the thatched roof and the broad chimneys. *Page 47*

Their first morning in Tonroe opened bright and cheery, outside as well as in, and Kathleen was so excited over all the new sights that she could hardly wait to eat her breakfast. Of course everything had to be described to Mary Ellen, and Patrick's hearty laugh filled the kitchen when Kathleen told her sister that the village looked as if a giant had taken a great creel filled with houses, and dropped them from a high ladder to the plain below.

"Kathleen never saw so many houses together before, till she went to Letterkenny yesterday to take the train away from Donegal," Danny explained.

"Then she'll like to ride over to Boyle with Bee on market days," said Patrick kindly; "there's houses a-plenty there. But the plains of Boyle will look flat enough to her after the mountains of her own county."

"Oh, Mary Ellen, come here!" cried Kathleen, who had gone to the back door for another look at the village. "There's a church steeple far away beyond a hilleen, and there's the fine National School building that Grandma Barry used to tell us about. It's on the little hill, and I can see it every time I look out at the door. But the mountains are far away. There's not one to be seen near by."

"Perhaps they have put on a cloak of darkness,"

suggested Mary Ellen. "Is there nothing at all where the mountains rightly belong?"

"It's better than mountains," said Kathleen decidedly, to Patrick's delight. "There's another hilleen of trees just beyond the hedge, and it looks like a picnic garden, for the trees are all covered with creels and creels of pink and white blossoms."

"She means the rath, and the hawthorn trees," exclaimed Patrick.

"It is an old fort, darlin'," Bee explained, "and it was built by a great chief hundreds of years ago; but it looks like a little hill now. There's another just forninst the church steeple; and one off to the side of the house that you'd best not go too near."

"Why not?" asked Kathleen curiously.

"An old chief was buried there hundreds of years ago," answered Bee, "and now the fairies live in it."

"Oh, Mary Ellen," whispered Kathleen, "there are fairies here after all, and we were thinkin' we had left them behind us in Donegal."

Then she said aloud to Cousin Bee, "It would be a fine place for the fairies to dance under the pink and white trees in the rath beyond the garden. Did the old chiefs have their picnics there?"

"Whist, jewel, the Irish chiefs had other things to do," said her cousin. "They had to be fighting with other chiefs, and killing the wild beasts; and sometimes they went off hunting foxes and deer

through the green forests, but I'm thinking they had no time for picnics."

Mary Ellen was standing by Kathleen's side, her sightless eyes looking beyond the green hedge toward the beautiful mound of trees that scented the air with thousands of blossoms.

"What did the chiefs do with the forts?" she asked.

"They lived in them," answered Bee. "First they built a great circular wall of earth or stone to keep out wild beasts and robbers; and then inside the wall they built their house. Sometimes there were two or three walls, one outside the other. The forts were called raths, and if a king lived in them his house was called a dun."

"That rath looks like a grove of trees now," said Kathleen.

"The trees have grown up on the walls, and the houses are all gone hundreds of years ago," Bee replied.

"What did the houses look like?" asked Mary Ellen.

"The darlin'! she wants to know how it all looked just as if she had the sight," said Bee, putting her arm around the child.

"Well," she went on, "the houses were shaped like bee-hives. They were built of poles all woven in and out with twigs, like wicker baskets, so the

books say. Many a town in Ireland to-day is built where a chief's rath or a king's dun once stood, and it gets its name by that token. There's Dundalk and Dunglow and Dunmore, Rathmelton, Rathdrum and Rathcormack. There are duns and raths all over the country."

"There are 'Kils,' too," said Mary Ellen. "Kathleen found them in our old geography, and Father made a little verse about them. He says that 'Kil' means church, and that St. Patrick built some of the churches. I don't remember the verse, though. Do you, Kathleen?"

"That I do," said her sister, and she sang to an odd little tune:

"Of 'Killys' and 'Kils' there are many.
There's Kildare and Kilmaine and Kilkenney,
Killybegs, Killashee,
Killimore, Killyleagh,
Kilworth and Kilcock and Kilkelly."

"Good enough," said Patrick, clapping his hands and laughing so heartily that everyone else laughed.

"There are dozens of 'ballys,' too," said Mary Ellen, when the laughter was over. "Kathleen made a list of them, and Father said they would make a whole string of verses, but he didn't get time for it yet. 'Bally means town,' he said."

"Did the chiefs ever have any sports besides

hunting?" asked Danny, who was fond of sports and had tried many a running race with the boys at Farmer Flynn's.

"To be sure," Patrick replied. "Over in Leinster they held a great fair once in every three years, and they had games and chariot races and horse races. People went to the fair from miles around, and the harpers and story-tellers always planned their wanderings so as to be there for the three days."

"It must have been something like market day," said Kathleen, who could not forget the crowd she saw at the Letterkenny market.

"There was marketing, too," said Patrick. "It would n't be Ireland without marketing. There was selling and buying of horses, sheep, and pigs, and all sorts of hand-made gold and bronze ornaments. The country was famous for her hand-crafts then; and she will be so again some day, praise be!"

"There could n't have been such pig markets as the one we saw yesterday," said Danny, laughing at the thought of the hundreds of squealing pigs in the Letterkenny streets.

"I don't know about that," said Bee. "It took them two years to get ready for the Leinster fairs, and we go to market in Boyle twice a week."

"I should be on my way there now, instead of sitting here talking as if I'd nothing to do," said

Patrick. "I want to see Tim Keefe about buying the heifer come Saturday. Have you any eggs to send, Bridget mavourneen? And will you go with me, Danny, my boy?"

Danny went out to help Patrick harness the mule, Mary Ellen held the creel while Kathleen counted out five score of eggs, and Bee packed ten pounds of beautiful, golden butter into the market basket.

"There, Patrick avic," she said, as she followed him to the barn and put the basket into the trap, "bring me back a good bit of silver for my work, and a ribbon apiece for the children. I'll have them watching for you when you come home."

"This is the best day to sell the butter," she said to Kathleen, as the trap disappeared down the boreen toward the road. "There'll be people buying everything you can name, from butter and eggs to needles and pins and imitation gold chains, at the Wednesday market."

"What will they buy in the Saturday market?" asked the child.

"Pigs, calves, sheep and wool, hay, potatoes, and every kind of vegetable that grows," was the answer. "I'm raising a little pig that I'm going to take to the Saturday market myself some day; and Patrick's heifer is the best in Boyle for its age. Tim Keefe ought to give him a good price for it."

Then she took Kathleen into the barn and showed

her the heifer and the little pig, the two baby donkeys, the hens and the geese.

"If we get everything well started in the garden we will go on a picnic to Lough Gara come May-day, and you shall stay and go with us," she said, leading Kathleen into the garden.

Such a pretty garden it was, too! Paths bordered with box led through beds of lilies and roses; and there were beds of cowslips and hollyhocks and many another sweet, old-fashioned flower.

After they had walked up and down the little paths and looked at all the buds and blossoms, they went back into the kitchen, where Kathleen washed the dishes while Bee put the bread to bake in the Irish baking-oven. This oven looks like a kettle and it stands on four feet among the burning peat with more peat heaped on the cover.

"If Mary Ellen could see, and I was going to live here always, and Father could come back and live here, too, and Danny need never go to America, this would be the prettiest farm and the best place in the whole world," Kathleen said to herself with a long sigh.

Bee heard the sigh and asked what it meant.

"I'm wishing I could find some way to bring Mary Ellen's eyesight back," Kathleen told her.

"Was she born blind?" questioned Bee.

"No," said Kathleen, "but her eyes were weak when she born, and when Grandma Barry came to live with us she said it was the smoke of the peat that had taken the sight away altogether. That was how it came about that Father made a chimney for the cottage, so that the smoke could go out instead of spreading through the room."

"There has been a good deal of blindness in Ireland from the smoke of burning peat in the houses," said Bee, looking thankfully at her own broad chimney and deep fireplace.

"Hark!" said Kathleen suddenly, "there's the child calling this minute," and she ran out into the garden to see what was the matter.

Mary Ellen had been exploring the little farm for herself. She had found her way through the garden to the old fort and was catching the pink and white petals as they drifted down to her from the trees. An old magpie had built his nest in the tree over her head and he was scolding so angrily that the child was afraid of him.

"Was it only a bird, Kathleen dear?" she asked, when her sister tried to quiet her by telling her just how funny he looked, sitting up there in the tree and opening and shutting his big bill. "Faith, I thought it was an ogre!"

"That's the very magpie that steals my young turkeys," said Bee, who had run out after Kathleen.

"If you children will find a way to drive him off I will give you a shilling."

Then she left the little girls to play by themselves, and Mary Ellen lay on the grass among the spring blossoms while Kathleen sat down beside her to tell her a long story.

"This is a truly fairy rath," she began, "and Cousin Bee's farm is the fortune fairy's palace."

And Cousin Bee, putting her cream into the churn, said to herself, "Sure, the farm is big enough to keep both the children for awhile. I'll let Kathleen stay on with Mary Ellen till her Aunt Hannah sends for her again."

CHAPTER IX

MAY-DAY ON LOUGH GARA

"It's the cute way nature has with her!" exclaimed Kathleen, holding up her face for the white-thorn petals to blow down upon it. She and Mary Ellen had been to the old rath after flowers for the May-baskets, and were returning to the cottage, where Cousin Bee was waiting to take them to Lough Gara for the May-day picnic. A breeze was scattering the petals from the trees, which were "as white with bloom as the snow of one night," and Mary Ellen turned her face to the sky so that she, too, might feel the soft shower.

"Sure, nature has a cute way," Kathleen repeated. "When a cloud hides the bright sun and you'd think an Irish rain was going to fall the next minute, the wind gives a laugh and sends a snowstorm instead; and here it is the first day of May, and the blackbirds are singing in the meadow."

"Can you see the snow on the mountains far away?" asked Mary Ellen.

"No, but the white chalk cliffs shine like snow," replied Kathleen. "It seems as if we must forget,

here in Tonroe, about the mountains and the cold, snowy winter. When I wake up in the morning and hear the lark singing his way up into the sky, and smell the May-bloom through the window, I almost forget the gray stones and low clouds of purple Donegal."

"Do you mind the old black crows that used to call over the hills all day long?" asked Mary Ellen.

"Of caws! Of caws!" croaked Kathleen, so much like an old crow that her sister made her do it again and again, "to remind her of home," she said.

The children had been at Cousin Bee's little farm in Tonroe for over two weeks, and Danny had made himself so useful that Patrick offered him good wages to stay and help him through the planting season.

"Sure, I care more for work than for anything else just now," Danny made answer, and he rolled up his sleeves and went to work with a will.

"There's no need for Kathleen to go to Kilkenny either, now that the school is near to closing for the summer," Bee suggested.

So Kathleen washed the dishes and watched the young turkeys. She fed the hens and found their eggs when they stole nests in the little village of grain-stacks in the hay-haggard. And, best of all, she found an old cow-bell in the barn and set Mary

Ellen to ringing it every time the thieving magpie came back to his nest, until he was glad to take his family away to live in a quieter neighborhood and leave the young turkeys to wander through the old rath in safety.

In fact, she made herself so useful that Uncle Barney, over in Killaraght, nodded his head when he heard of it, and Grandmother Connell said in the old Gaelic, which looks in print as if it might be fairy speech, "Kathleen always had good sense and handy ways."

And now it was May-day at last, and the little family had been busy all the morning getting ready for the picnic.

"Come, children," called Bee from the house door, "here are Norah Higgins and Hannah Kelley waiting for us, and Patrick and Danny have gone on ahead for the boat."

Then off they all went down the lane, between the hedges of pink hawthorn, purple lilac and gleaming golden gorse, across the fields, and along the green bank of the river.

A neighbor who was driving his family down to the lake in a jaunting-car stopped to ask them why they weren't riding themselves, but Bee said she thought it was far more pleasant to walk, and they trudged along, talking and laughing merrily.

Pink and white mayflowers, blue wall-flowers and



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“A NEIGHBOR WAS DRIVING HIS FAMILY DOWN TO THE LAKE IN A
JAUNTING-CAR”

The jaunting-car has side seats, with a “well” between them for parcels.

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ASTOR LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

yellow daffies grew under their feet, and the fields were full of blue-bells. Robins and thrushes sang over their heads, and in the distance they heard the sound of a hunting horn and the baying of the hounds.

Danny was waiting for them at the boat landing, and Patrick made haste to gather his party into a boat and row them out upon the blue water, so that they could watch the happy crowds coming and going along the shore. Kathleen looked back across the fields and saw hundreds of men, women, and children, all dressed in their very best, trooping toward the lake, carrying lunch-baskets for their May-day picnic on Lough Gara.

"Oh, Molly darling," she whispered, "it's better than anything we ever thought of in Donegal. It's a wish come true."

Mary Ellen clung to her sister's hand, listening to the happy voices calling from boat to boat, and from water to shore. "It must be the place Grandma Barry used to tell us about," she said, — "the place where happiness is so common you can buy it for a ha'penny."

Kathleen's eyes were fixed on the green island toward which Danny was rowing them. "It looks more like the home of the fairies than does the Rock of Doon," she told Bee.

"They do say that the fairies haunt Lough Gara,"

her cousin answered. "At night, when there's no one to see them, they gallop round and round the lake, winding their hunting horns and following the fairy hounds just as the ladies and gentlemen do at the meets on the big estate at French Park."

Just then the boat touched the shore of the little island and there was no more time to talk of fairies. Pretty Mary Hever and her brother John were waiting for them under the trees, and every one was ready to help in the merry fun of setting out the lunch.

The girls plaited wreaths of flowers and oak leaves, and crowned Bee and Mary Ellen; John Hever found a spring of clear water and filled the cups; and Bee set out the sandwiches and cheese and some of her delicious cookies which were the best in all Tonroe.

"There 'll be just time enough for the lunch before we go to Kingsland for the sports," Patrick said, as he sat down on the grass between Kathleen and Mary Ellen and began to help them to cookies the very first thing.

"Be off with your joking," said Bee. "We can't hurry the picnic like that. Half the fun of the lunch is the blarney that goes with it."

"Faith, John Hever will do the eating while we take care of the blarney," replied her husband, laughing at the boy's first mouthful.

"Tell us about Donegal," Hannah Kelley said to Kathleen.

"There's nothing to tell," replied Kathleen. "There are just purple mountains and rocky hills and bogs, and Mary Ellen and I had no one to play with at all."

"You should see the great cliffs over at Horn Head," said Danny proudly. "That's something to tell about! When there has been a storm, the waves pound against them and the spray dashes up so that it is a grand sight."

"I'm thinking it was up there that the giant used to step from cliff to cliff when he was walking round the island to be sure everything was all right for the night," said Bee, who seemed to know stories of all the giants and fairies.

John Hever looked down at his own short legs with a sigh. "Sure, he must have been a big giant," he said, "to walk around all Ireland every night of his life."

"That he was," replied Patrick with a laugh. "Were you thinking you'd catch up with him on his next round?"

"I was not," answered John, "but I'll soon be beating you in a race to Dublin town."

"It's ten years and more since I played that game with fifty other boys and girls; and that, too, around the policeman's legs in the streets of Cork!"

exclaimed Patrick. "But come on then, and we'll see how it seems to go doubling among these tree-trunks."

He seized Bee's hand and they began singing "How many miles to Dublin Town?" just as Kathleen and Mary Ellen had sung it so often in far Donegal. But now there were many to join in the game, and one after another the children caught hold of hands and ran in and out among the trees, singing and shouting.

When Patrick thought they had had enough of the game he led them all down to the boat and pushed off for the sports at the Kingsland shore.

Never before, Kathleen thought, had so many things happened in one day. There were bicycle-races, hurdle-races, foot-races, sack-races and a tug-of-war. There was leaping, and jumping, and running, and it seemed as if Danny was in everything.

Such shouting and cheering she had never even dreamed of! And when Danny won the long-distance run, she found herself jumping up and down and shouting as loudly as any one.

"I could have won that first dash, too, if Tim Keefe had n't stolen the start," said Danny wrathfully, as he brought up his prize to show to his cousins.

"The prize for that race was a mirror, anyway,"

said Patrick consolingly, "and you 've little use for one now. But as for Tim Keefe, with his old pipe in his mouth, he needs it to see himself for a spalpeen."

After the fun was all over they went home together across the fields, filling their arms with great branches of the pink and white hawthorn blossoms; but at the boreen they had to start running, for a sudden shower fell to drive them into the house the quicker.

Just as the children were going off to bed that night, Kathleen went softly up to Bee and put her arm shyly around her cousin's plump waist. "It's thankful I am to you and Patrick for the happy day," she whispered.

Bee gave her a good hug and a hearty kiss as she answered, "'Tis you and little Mary Ellen that make all the days happy for me."

CHAPTER X

A BANK OF TURF

"MARY ELLEN, dear, did you ever think it would be so fine to live out of Donegal?"

"No," answered the little sister, "I've been thinking of the market ever since Saturday; and yesterday was the walk to Lough Gara again, and to-day is the sheep-shearing. Belike by Friday they will begin to cut the turf. It is better than Donegal, even if Father is not with us."

"Oh, Mary Ellen, I doubt they'll begin cutting out peat on a Friday. It will bring them bad luck."

"Perhaps they will begin on Thursday, then," suggested her sister. "Is there any ill luck in that day?"

It was a beautiful morning toward the end of May, and the two little girls were watching the shearing of the sheep at Uncle Barney's farm. More than a hundred bleating sheep and lambs were collected near the house, where they were guarded by a trained shepherd dog and watched over by Kathleen.

"Kathleen is the colleen that's good at everything," Patrick said one day after the picnic at Lough Gara. "She'll milk a cow as well as ever her great-grandmother Connell did. She's got the firm hand for it, and the sweet voice."

"She can bake as fine a loaf of bread as I can, and that is saying a good deal, too," said Bee proudly.

"I'll see what kind of a shepherd lass she will make, come shearing-time," said Uncle Barney, who had come over from Killaraght to get Danny to help him. "We'll need some one to keep the sheep from straying away after they have been washed."

So Kathleen was watching the sheep for her uncle, and talking over the Saturday market with her sister.

"Sure, I thought Bee's little pig would squeal himself black in the face before she got him sold," said Mary Ellen.

"I mind Bee did better with her little pig than Patrick did with his big heifer," Kathleen replied with a laugh.

"Why?" asked Mary Ellen.

"Has n't Patrick been trying to sell his heifer to Tim Keefe ever since we came to Tonroe?" Kathleen answered. "Faith, he only finished the bargain last Saturday; and it was Uncle Barney that brought it about then, else they'd still be a-higgling."

"What's this you are saying?" asked Patrick, who was selecting another sheep to shear.

"We're saying that Bee makes a better bargain than you," Kathleen told him.

"How's that?" he asked.

"She got half as much for her pig as you did for the heifer, and the heifer was costing her feed all the four weeks you were making the bargain."

Patrick threw back his head with a great laugh. "Here's the child for you," he called to Uncle Barney. "She says I was feeding the heifer for Tim Keefe for four weeks and getting nothing for it."

"Tim Keefe is a young spalpeen," said Uncle Barney. "I'd give a pound myself to see somebody get the better of him. It is what nobody ever did yet," and he smiled down into Kathleen's gray eyes.

He forgot his words the next minute, but Kathleen remembered them, even after the sheep-shearing was over and the turf-cutting had begun in the bog.

Bog-land is found in almost every part of Ireland; but much of it is dangerous for travel, and all of it has to be drained before the peat can be cut. Causeways lead to the parts that are drained, but there are many deep pools of swampy water in the bogs, which are filled with tufts of spongy moss and slimy tree trunks.

The turf is cut out in blocks by a man who uses



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CUTTING BRICKS OF PEAT AND STACKING THEM UP TO DRY

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a long-handled spade. He tosses the blocks to his helper who stands waiting for them, and who carries them to a barrow or creel. When the barrow is filled it is wheeled away to higher ground where the blocks of turf are stacked up and dried in the sun and wind.

Kathleen begged to be Danny's helper, and on the morning when he began cutting in the bog she stood beside him. As fast as he filled her arms with the peat she trudged sturdily away and stacked it up to dry, just as Patrick had taught her.

As she stood waiting for her twentieth load she asked, "How long will it take for this turf to be dry enough to carry home and stack under the shed?"

"It takes all summer to get the peat dry enough to burn," Danny told her. "In August and September there will be hundreds of little donkeys, all over the country, going to market loaded with big creels of dry peat. Twenty bricks of the peat are sold for a sixpence."

Danny was cutting turf for Patrick and Uncle Barney in a bog which lay on the border of Lough Gara, and Kathleen stopped occasionally to rest her arms and watch a boat-load of peasants who had hired the next bank to Patrick's, and who came across the lake to cut it. It was hard work to carry the wet turf, and she was quite ready to go home

when Patrick drove the mule down to the lake for them at five o'clock.

"Two of Mike Drury's cows were swallowed up in a moving bog over in County Galway last week," she heard him tell Danny.

It was the first time she had ever heard of a moving bog, and she looked at him with frightened eyes. "Will this bog swallow Danny up?" she asked.

"Hop into the trap and forget it, alanna," replied Patrick cheerfully. "Nothing of the sort will ever happen here. This bog is too well drained for that. But they do say that in times past whole houses have been swallowed up in the bogs."

"What made the bog-land?" Kathleen asked, as they rode along toward home.

"The bushes and trees gradually fell into the swamp and decayed, and those that grew above them fell and decayed in the same way," Patrick told her. "It was going on before ever the giants or fairies lived in the country."

"Here's something I found in the bog more than a foot below the surface," said Danny. "It must have been buried there for hundreds of years, for the turf was solid all around it."

He took from his pocket a small iron cross of curious design and beautiful workmanship, and Patrick examined it with great interest.

"It is an ancient ornament," he said, "such as

they used to make here in Ireland in olden times. Mayhap it belonged to Queen Maive herself, she that was Queen of the West nearly two thousand years ago. All kinds of things are found in the bogs. Sometimes men find firkins of butter and moulds of cheese which have been buried for years and years. Bee will tell you all about it; 't is she that has the learning," he added proudly, and hurried home to show the cross to his wife.

There was a happy ending to Kathleen's hard day's work in the bog, when, sitting among the flowers of the old rath, with the soft wind blowing through the trees over their heads, Bee told them about the time when the men of Ireland were famous workers in metal.

"In the National Museum at Dublin there are many of the most precious bits of handiwork to be found in all Europe," she said. "No doubt they would be glad to have this cross in one of their glass cases."

But Danny leaned over and put it into Kathleen's hand. "Those that are slow at knitting stockings are oftentimes quickest at catching turfs," he said. "You may have the cross to wear, mavourneen, if you like."

Kathleen hung her head. "I finished the stockings before I left Donegal," she replied, "and the peddler said they were well-knit."

"Is there bog-land all over Ireland?" asked little Mary Ellen, who knew that her sister did not like to talk about the stockings.

Grandmother Barry used to say that Kilkenny was the most favored county in the country," replied Bee; "and in one of my old reading-books there was a rhyme about Kilkenny, that it had:

Fire without smoke, air without fog,
Water without mud, and land without bog.

"Kilkenny," repeated Kathleen. "That is where I am going to visit Aunt Hannah, I suppose; but I know I shall never like it so well as living here with you, Cousin Bee."

Bee went into the house and came back again in a few minutes, carrying a small flat box from which she took a photograph of a pleasant-faced woman, the very image of dear Uncle Barney.

"There's your Aunt Hannah Malone," she said, showing the picture to Kathleen; "she is the best woman in the world, and the mother of ten fine children." And Kathleen, looking at the twinkling eyes and smiling mouth, knew at once that she should be happy in Kilkenny.

CHAPTER XI

KATHLEEN EARNS A POUND

“THERE’S to be a big meet to-day,” Patrick said, as Danny and Kathleen were getting ready to start for the bog the next morning.

There had been a shower or two in the night, and raindrops sparkled on every blade of grass and twinkled among the green leaves of the trees; but the sun was breaking through the clouds and promised a fair day for the turf-cutting.

It was, indeed, a fair day and a fair green country, and Patrick, who had started for the barn with his milk pails, began singing in his hearty voice:

“Oh, Ireland, isn’t it grand you look,
Like a bride in her rich adornin’!
And with all the pent-up love of my heart,
I bid you the top of the mornin’.”

“What is a meet?” Kathleen asked, as she and her brother trudged down the road to the bog.

“It’s a hunting-party, and the ladies and gentlemen from the country round about meet together

for it," Danny answered, stopping a moment to look at the tiny green sloes on the blackthorn hedge.

"What do they hunt?" she asked.

"Sometimes they hunt a deer; and sometimes it's foxes or rabbits they are after," he replied.

"If they are hunting a deer I hope they won't catch it," Kathleen said earnestly.

But when the sound of the hunting-horn rang merrily across the bog, from the direction of Uncle Barney's house in Killaraght, she was full of excitement over the chase.

"Listen!" she cried, standing with outstretched arms to catch the brick of turf Danny was ready to throw to her; "listen, there's the horn now! It sounds so sweet I'd almost think it was the fairies."

Danny waited until they heard the baying of the hounds and the halloo of the riders, and then he went on with his work.

"They may kill harmless animals if they like; but I'd rather be able to hit your hands with a brick of turf," he said, suiting the action to the word, "than to hit a handsome deer with a bullet."

Kathleen's thoughts were busy with the hunters for a long time and she asked her brother endless questions about them,—Where did they live? What did they do with the deer? How did the horses go over the stone walls and fences? Why did the riders wear scarlet coats?

"How many hunters are there?" she asked at last.

"Oh, fifteen or more," Danny answered carelessly. "But if they needed thirty men to catch one poor deer, they could find them easily. There's the surgeon from the hospital in Boyle, for one. Bee says he is over here to-day for the hunting."

"The surgeon from the Boyle hospital," Kathleen repeated, under her breath.

"Oh, if I could just see him, and tell him about Mary Ellen's eyes!" she thought. "Perhaps he could make her well before I have to go to Kilkenny, if I only had the money."

She forgot the hunters for a while, and gave all her thought to her work, and to planning how she could earn more shillings after the turf-cutting was finished. Over and over again, as she trudged from the bog to the stack of wet turf, she heard the music of the horn,—now near, now far. When it grew faint her hope died away, but when it rang loud and clear her heart grew light, as if she had received a promise of help for her sister.

Once she saw a flash of scarlet-coated riders far beyond the bog, the horses at a gallop; and again a stray hound bounded past her, within a few yards of the mound where she was stacking the turf.

A little before noon Danny sent her home for her dinner. "You are too little to work as steadily

as you did yesterday," he said kindly. "Uncle Barney and Patrick are coming down this afternoon, and they are going to bring two more to help, so the work will go faster."

So Kathleen left her work and hurried down the road, little dreaming that she herself was soon to take part in the hunt.

Just as she reached the little lane that led up to Cousin Bee's house she heard a noise, and looking off across the fields she saw a horseman coming towards her, shouting and waving his arms.

At first she took him for one of the hunters; but he wore a dark suit and an old straw hat, and his horse looked as if it could do better at drawing a plow than at jumping a fence.

Kathleen ran to the barn and stood beside the open door to see which way the rider was going, when suddenly she saw something else that made her heart stand still with excitement.

A beautiful deer was bounding across the fields! He leaped the wall into the road, and came down the little lane toward the house at a gallop.

The horseman pounded down the road behind him, the hounds were baying in the distance, and almost before Kathleen knew what was happening, the deer had run into the wide-open barn door and she had closed it behind him and was listening in terror to the sound of his plunging hoofs.

Then the excitement really began, for the strange hunter, who was no one but Tim Keefe himself, rode into the yard on his old farm-horse, and Patrick, Bee and Mary Ellen ran out of the house to see what was the matter.

Patrick heard the noise in the barn and ran to see if his cows had gone crazy; Kathleen ran to hold the door and tell him about the deer, and Tim Keefe began to shout at the top of his voice that it was his deer because he had seen it first.

He had been riding to the Kingsland bog to hire a bank of turf, he said, and the deer had crossed his path. He remembered that a pound reward is always given to the one who holds the deer for the hunters, and he had ridden after it, hoping by some means to gain the reward.

Patrick smiled his broad smile. "It will be Kathleen who will get the pound, after all," he said.

"But it was myself that whipped him down the road," said Tim hotly.

Patrick's smile broke into a laugh. "'T was Kathleen that shut him into the barn," he said, "and 't is a fine whipper-in you make, Tim Keefe."

Tim's coat was ragged and his trousers had seen the rains of many an Irish summer, an old pipe smoked in his mouth, and he was such a sorry-looking figure altogether that even Bee laughed at the sight of him.

And while they all laughed, there came the "tally-ho!" of the hunters just beyond the old fort; the dogs swept into sight, and the real whipper-in rode up to the very door of the barn.

In a moment the yard turned red to Kathleen's eyes, for a dozen mounted horsemen in scarlet coats and buff riding-breeches galloped close behind him, with ladies in gray and ladies in black, all riding splendid horses.

Patrick sent the children out of the way of the horses' feet, while he explained how it happened that his barn was stabling a deer.

Then the whipper-in quieted his hounds, and the ladies and gentlemen looked at bashful Kathleen, who had quite lost her voice in the midst of so much excitement. But when she was offered the pound that Tim Keefe had expected to receive, she shook her head.

"Tell them I want the deer to go free," she whispered to Patrick.

How everyone laughed at the idea! But in the end they agreed to it, telling her that she might open the barn door whenever she pleased. Then they all went away down the boreen, "as goodly a cavalcade as ever rode on Irish soil," Bee said.

As for Patrick, in one breath he laughed at Kathleen's wit and courage, and in the next he praised her tender heart. "You're a good lass," he said,

"and you've earned a good dinner anyway. Come into the house and we'll see what Bee has been baking the morn. Then, after the hounds are well out of the way, we'll open the barn door and see the deer take himself off to the woods."

That afternoon, when they were all working in the bog, Kathleen heard Patrick telling Danny and Uncle Barney the story of her deer hunt. "There was Tim Keefe, on his old nag, with his pipe in his mouth," he said, "thinking he was the grand whipper-in, and would get the pound for himself."

"It's a fine day that sees Tim Keefe outwitted for once," exclaimed Uncle Barney, slapping his knee with his hand.

Kathleen heard his words and turned to him quickly. "You said that you would give a pound to hear that Tim Keefe had been outwitted," she said.

Uncle Barney laughed till his sides shook. "Good for you! Good for you!" he said, and actually took out the money and gave it to her.

She looked at it doubtfully, and he laughed again. "You earned it fair, and 't was worth it," he told her.

So Kathleen folded the money and put it carefully away in her pocket, thinking as she did so that, after all, the hunting-horn had brought a promise of help for little Mary Ellen.

CHAPTER XII

THE YOUNG MALONES

The oldest one is Tara,
Next Captain Connemara,
And Moira and Norah, each a twin;
Then "Save-a-Shilling Deena"
And little Princess Feena,
But hold the door,—there's others to come in;
There's Hannah and there's Anna,
We call them both "alanna,"
Then young Columba, he's the gentle dove;
And last of all Victoria,
She's not the one to frighten ye,
For she's the youngest one, the one ye'll love.

Chorus

Oh, would ye learn to count the young Malones?
Ye've only just to trip it two by two;
Of couples there's a many,
At Malone's in old Kilkenny,
And we'd like to count you two, too, at Malone's!

NEVER did two travellers receive a noisier or heartier greeting than the ten young Malones gave to Danny and Kathleen on the night of their arrival from Tonroe. From twenty-four-year-old Tara to three-year-

old Victoria there was nothing but bright faces, merry voices, and outstretched hands.

No one could be shy or homesick in the midst of so much jollity, and in no time at all Kathleen was laughing and talking as gaily as if she had lived with "the Malones in old Kilkenny" all her life.

When, at last, she fell asleep for the night, two of the happy family stood out most clearly in her memory. One was Connemara, who had slipped her motherly arm around the little girl's tired shoulders to draw her away from the hubbub and put her to bed. The other was Columba, who followed her to the foot of the stairs to say, "I'll tell you to-morrow why they call me 'the gentle dove.' It's because I have such an awful temper. And up at St. Kieran's College they call Deena 'Save-a-Shilling Malone,' because he advertises in the *Weekly Budget* that the students can save a shilling on their books if they buy them of him," he added, shouting the last words as Connemara led Kathleen down the long hall to her own little bedroom.

As she lay in her bed, thinking over all the happy events of the day, she heard the thirteen-year-old twins, Hannah and Anna, shouting with laughter over a joke of Deena's. Then the two older twins began a duet on the piano, and just as she was trying to think of the tune they were playing she shut her eyes and was lost in the land of Nod.

In the meantime good Uncle Tom Malone had taken Danny into his library to talk with the lad about his plans. It was a simple story that Danny had to tell. He was going at once to Queenstown to take the steamer there for America.

"Do you know any one over there?" asked his uncle, looking at him with shrewd eyes.

"No," replied Danny, "but I know how to work, and that's something."

"What did Patrick say to it?" asked Uncle Tom.

"He said he had no fear but that I would do well," said Danny modestly, "but he wanted me to stay in Ireland. He said I could do well here, too."

"Did he want you to stay with him on the farm?"

"Yes, but I'm thinking I can do better in some other line than farming," said Danny. "I'd like to get into a shop and work my way up."

"If you are in no hurry to go to America you might stay and have a try at working for me," suggested his uncle. "I have a linen shop here in Kilkenny. Next year, if you do well, I'll send you and Tara to one of the great linen mills in Belfast to learn the business."

"I'd like nothing better," replied Danny heartily, "and I'll do my best to make the most of the chance."

"There's as good a place for you here as you will find in America," said his uncle, "and we can't afford to let all our lads leave their own country."

So the next day found Danny in the linen shop with Tara, while Kathleen, at home with her cousins, was learning to know and love them all.

But it was to pretty Fiona, "Princess Feena" the children called her, with the curly hair, brown eyes, and fluttering ribbons, that Kathleen took the greatest fancy, and she followed her about everywhere, just to watch the gleams of sunshine shake out from the rippling waves that crowned her cousin's head.

As for Fiona, having been named for an Irish princess, she talked by the hour about kings, queens, and castles, and the royal times she hoped to enjoy some day; while Kathleen listened as if she were enchanted.

It was useless for the twins, Hannah and Anna, to try to entice her away for a game. She preferred to listen while Feena told stories, or read aloud from some old book of the time when Ireland was ruled by "a king with flowing golden hair, his crimson cloak held at the breast by a magnificent jewelled brooch, his shirt interwoven with gold threads, and his girdle sparkling with precious gems."

Columba, too, was sadly disappointed at not finding a playmate in Kathleen. He had even given way to his temper one day when, instead of going for a ride in the trap with him, she had chosen to walk along the bank of the River Nore with Feena to see the beautiful ivy-covered Kilkenny Castle.

He went to Connemara, or "Captain Conn" as she was always called, with his grievance. "She's gone off with Feena again," he said wrathfully, "and here I've been planning to show her St. Canice's Church and the Round Tower ever since she came. I can tell her plenty of stories about the old Round Tower, if it's stories she wants."

"Perhaps she would not like your stories," suggested Connemara. "Feena would never tell her that great stones were dropped from the top of the Round Tower, down one hundred feet on the heads of men, murdering Danes though they were."

"Well, the Danes deserved all the trouble they found; they made enough for us, the spalpeens!" said Columba, the gentle dove. "We were a peaceable nation, content to fight among ourselves, when the Danes came crowding into the land. I'm glad Brian Boru was man enough to drive them out again."

"But then," he added, "if she does n't like to hear about the priests carrying stones to the top of the tower to drop them on the heads of the Danes,

I can tell her that they carried their precious books into the tower for safety; and that they used to stand at the four little windows at the top looking out over the country to watch for the approach of an enemy.

“Or I can take her down to Kilkenny Castle and tell her how Strongbow, the Governor of Ireland, built his fortress there nearly a thousand years ago, and brought his bride, the daughter of the King of Leinster, to live in the Castle. Then I can show her St. Canice’s Cathedral, where the soldiers of Cromwell’s army, when they were besieging the city in 1650, used to amuse themselves by smashing the beautiful windows and throwing the bells down out of the tower.”

Connemara could not help laughing as she looked at her brother’s earnest face. “’Tis plain that you know the history of the city,” she said, “but your stories are all about wars. To-morrow is market-day. Ask Kathleen to go with you down through the city streets to see the old peddler women in their bright shawls, selling their wares in the little booths and tents. That will be a strange sight to the child, after lonely Donegal; and she’ll like it better than battles.”

After supper that night she took Kathleen within the cosy shelter of her arms and talked with her about little Mary Ellen and her life in Tonroe.

"She's like Victoria," said Kathleen, "gentle and loving. I wish she could be here instead of me. She used to wish that whole troops of boys and girls would come over the bare Donegal hills to play with us."

But when, on the next afternoon, Columba took her in the donkey-trap and drove in and out among the streets of Kilkenny, she almost forgot Tonroe and the little sister.

They went first to the market, and Kathleen spent one of the precious shillings she had earned stacking peat to buy a string of pink beads to send to Mary Ellen. Then they drove past the Cathedral and down to the Castle, and came home along the bank of the River Nore, which is one of the prettiest rivers in all Ireland.

"Sure, you are the fine driver," Kathleen said admiringly to Columba, as he sent the little donkey along at a rattling pace behind a jaunting-car filled with tourists.

And of the two it would have been hard to tell which was the happier that day, — Kathleen, whirling along the beautiful tree-shaded river seeing the city, or Columba, showing to her admiring eyes how much at home he was among such grand sights.

CHAPTER XIII

KATHILEEN'S COMPOSITION

“ Oh, Deena Malone, ye 've a wonderful way with ye,
All the young childer are wild for to play with ye! ”

CAPTAIN CONN sang, as she led little Victoria, all freshly dressed for supper, to the group near the piano.

Deena made a deep bow to her, as he kept up his part of the jig in the three-hand reel, while Hannah and Anna, who were dancing with him, called “ Faster, faster! ” to Moira, who was playing on the piano.

The street door banged, and Columba dashed into the house, shouting, “ Danny won the hundred-yard dash, — Danny won! Hooray! ”

Immediately the reel became a breakdown, and when Danny entered the room, followed by Tara and Uncle Tom, everyone fell upon him, eager to give him a rousing whack of good-will.

The supper bell sounded above the din, and out into the dining-room tumbled the twelve, singing at the top of their lungs, “ For lightness of foot there was not his peer; ” — and clasping hands in

a great circle, they danced round and round the table before taking their places.

The only one to keep her hair unruffled through the performance was Princess Feena. No matter how often the young Malones ended a reel in "all hands around," she looked as royally calm at the end as at the beginning.

After living with the Malones for a whole winter, Kathleen found the dainty little lady as adorable as ever. Now, on St. Patrick's Day, just a year from the time Aunt Hannah's letter had reached her in far Donegal, Kathleen had grown so fond of the whole jolly, noisy family, that she wondered how she had ever lived anywhere else.

Danny, also, had made a place for himself and was earning good wages in the linen shop. Not a holiday had he taken in the whole winter until this seventeenth of March, when he entered the sports.

"Ireland was always famous for her athletes," said his uncle, as he began serving supper to the hungry brood.

"Have n't you been doing anything to make your name famous, Kathleen mavourneen?" he asked kindly.

Kathleen blushed to find everyone looking at her and waiting for her answer.

"Speak up, for the honor of old Donegal," said Deena.

"I saw her standing before the whole class with a paper in her hand the other day," said Anna. "It looked as if she were reading it."

"Confess, confess!" cried Deena. "Don't hide anything from us. Let us know the worst at once."

Kathleen had seen so much good-natured fun among the children that winter that she knew it would be impossible to avoid telling what it was she had been reading to her classmates. Sooner or later it would have to come out under the children's quizzing, so she spoke frankly, saying, "It was only a paper we had to write about the learning in Ireland."

Up went the hands in admiration. "Our little Kathleen a writer!" said Hannah in mock astonishment, while Deena said reproachfully, "And she would have concealed it from her loving family!"

"It is a blow," murmured Anna; and Norah said, "Go fetch it, and read it at once."

"Yes!" shouted everybody. "Go fetch it and read it."

Kathleen looked at Captain Conn, who usually decided everything for the whole family.

"Yes," said Conn with a merry smile; "there's no harm in reading it to us."

So Kathleen fetched the little composition and read it with flaming cheeks and beating heart. It was called:

LEARNING IN IRELAND

There must be a great deal of learning still left in Ireland, but the books do not say so much about it as about the learning of long ago.

When St. Patrick lived, he built a great many monasteries here in the green country, and set the fashion to study and learn in them.

Other saints followed him and built more monasteries, and wherever there was a monastery there was sure to be a school where the sons of Irish chiefs might study. There were a great many chiefs and they must have had a great many sons; but the sons of the common people could also learn from the monks, and very often there were rich and poor studying together in the same house.

The fame of these Irish schools spread outside of this country, and in the different countries of Europe it became the fashion to go to school in Ireland, until, five hundred years after St. Patrick's time, this was the most learned country in the world.

The scholars built little huts in which they lived, but whenever the weather was pleasant they recited out of doors.

I wish it was the fashion to recite out of doors nowadays.

KATHLEEN BARRY.

B. A. You can see by the ruins scattered all over Ireland how many monasteries and schools there were. There are ruins in every county, but those in Kilkenny are the most interesting of all.

K. B.

There was a great clapping of hands when Kathleen finished reading, and cries of "Bravo! Bravo!"

In the midst of the uproar Deena pounded with his knife-handle on the table and shouted "Tally-ho! Tally-ho! Tally-ho-o-o-o!"

As soon as the hunting call quieted them he said, "Pray tell us the meaning of your Ogham characters 'B. A.' toward the close of your essay."

The Ogham writing is older than the oldest writing in Ireland, and a laugh went up again to hear Kathleen's letters likened to it.

Kathleen laughed, too, and looked at the "B. A." innocently enough, as she replied, "It means 'begin again.' Is n't that what you write when you forget something and say it afterwards?"

"It will do," said Tara, patting her on the head, while Connie asked, "And what did the teacher say to your paper?"

"She said it would do, better than some papers that would n't do so well," answered the little girl, and wondered why the laughing began again.

Aunt Hannah smiled at her across the table. "Sure, 't is 'B. A.' with the fun and laughter at Malone's most of the time. Don't mind them, mavourneen," she said to the little girl, and then she told the children how she had learned the names of Ireland's thirty-two counties when she was a child.

"The children marched round and round the school-room," she said, "saying it like a poem, and all in concert. It began, 'Cork and Kerry, Londonderry,' and went on through the whole thirty-two names. And when any one forgot a name he had to drop out and take his seat."

After the supper was over and she went into the den for a cosy chat with Uncle Tom, she said, "Sure, 't is a great pity that Jerry could n't be here to see how well both Danny and Kathleen are doing."

"They're fine children," agreed Uncle Tom. "Kathleen will be great at the learning some day, if she keeps on. Perhaps she'll turn out a teacher, as her father Jerry was meant to be."

"They're all fine children," murmured Aunt Hannah, listening to the happy voices around the piano as they began singing one of their favorite songs; and she rose and followed Uncle Tom to the other room, where they all sang together, "The Day When the Green Flag Flies."

CHAPTER XIV

THE WISHING SPRING

"WHAT was that you picked up, Kathleen?" Columba asked, as the two were walking home from school together one sunny afternoon in June.

"Oh, just an old nail," replied Kathleen, dropping it quickly into her pocket.

"What will you do with an old nail?" questioned Columba. "Are you thinking of building a house?"

Kathleen hesitated so long before replying that her cousin repeated, "What's an old nail good for?"

"I don't know exactly," Kathleen replied. "Granny Connor told me over a year ago that Mary Ellen should carry nine old nails in her pocket, and I found them and sewed them up in a little bag for her; but they've done no good that I can see. Now I'm finding nine more to send to her. Perhaps they will do better than the others. Oh, how I wish Mary Ellen could see! She has such pretty blue eyes, but no sight in them."

"I'll tell you what you ought to do," said Columba. "There's a spring in the woods down

beyond the ruins of Jerpoint Abbey at Thomastown, and they say if you drink a cup of the water, and wish three times, your wish will come true. We might all go down there on a picnic and you could wish about Mary Ellen's eyes. I wished for a pony once, and I got it," he added, by way of encouragement.

"Oh, Columba, did you really?" Kathleen asked eagerly. "How I'd like to try it! Do you suppose your mother would let us have the picnic to-morrow?"

"We'll ask her," Columba said decidedly, and the two walked along in silence for a little while, Kathleen thinking of her sister, and Columba planning what he would like to have in the lunch baskets.

"There's a wishing arch near the Giant's Causeway," Kathleen said finally. "I wrote to Father about it weeks ago and asked him to go there and wish for Mary Ellen's sight, but I've not heard a word from him yet. Perhaps he is waiting till the last Sunday in June. Grandmother Barry says that is the day the pilgrims go to the well in County Sligo to be cured of their rheumatism."

"Day after to-morrow will be the last Sunday in June, but we had better try the wishing spring, too, if Mother will let us," said Columba.

"I'll ask her now," he added, and rushed into the house, shouting first for his mother and then for

Captain Conn, sure that one or the other would be ready to plan for the next day's frolic.

"I've been thinking this two months that I ought to go down to see your Aunt Ellen Butler at Thomastown," said his mother, when he asked her about the picnic. "We'll take the early morning train and have a good visit with her, and perhaps she will take her children over to the Abbey and we'll all picnic together."

It was a merry party that gathered under the old oak tree beside the ruins of Jerpoint Abbey the next day, and the four big lunch baskets looked as if they could hardly hold enough for so many hungry children.

"We'll help you set out the lunch," suggested Deena, taking off one of the covers and helping himself to a sandwich.

"You'll not touch it till it's ready," replied Captain Conn. "Run away, every one of you, and stay until I call you."

"Come to the tower," called Columba, and all the children followed him as he clambered through one of the windows and climbed the ancient stone steps that led to the top of the square tower.

As they looked out over the beautiful, smiling country, with its green fields and peaceful river, Kathleen drew a long breath. "It makes me think of Donegal, it's so different," she said. "Up there

it is cold and bleak and bare, and down here it is all so quiet and happy."

"It was n't always quiet and happy here," said Deena. "This old Abbey has seen days of fighting and bloodshed."

"Tell us about it," said Hannah, who liked stories of battles.

"Yes, do," added Anna, who tried to like them.

"Well, you see," began Deena, "this old ruin was once a magnificent church. It was built over seven hundred years ago, at the time when the English lords came over to live in Ireland and set the fashion of building grand churches and monasteries all over the country. This was one of the finest of them all, and would be to this day, perhaps, but for Cromwell's army."

"Yes, go on," said Hannah, as Deena stopped to look off toward the distant hills. "Was it a big battle?"

"It was no battle at all," replied her brother. "When Cromwell's army came marching through the country the monks shut themselves up in this tower; but the soldiers went by without even stopping to look for them."

"What made the ruins, then?" asked Columba. "I thought you said it was Cromwell's army."

"So it was," replied Deena; "for when they had gone only two miles away the monks climbed up

here to the top of the tower and rang the bells for joy. The soldiers heard the bells, and were so angry that they came back and destroyed the monastery and the Abbey."

"Did they kill the monks?" asked Hannah.

"I don't know, but I suppose they did," replied her brother. "They destroyed many fine buildings and did many cruel deeds here in Ireland."

"They did n't destroy the Round Tower in Kilkenny," said Columba. "Those round towers must have been good hiding-places for the monks."

"That they were," replied Deena. "The old stones would tell many wonderful tales if they could speak."

"Are there many round towers in Ireland?" asked Kathleen.

"There are eighty still standing," Deena told her, "and twenty of them are perfect; but the others are more or less in ruins."

"What were they like?" asked little Tommy Butler. "I never saw one of them."

"They were round, stone towers, from sixty to one hundred and fifty feet tall," Deena replied. "Some of the tallest had six or seven stories, each story lighted by one window, and at the top there were four windows, facing north, south, east and west. There was only one small door, ten feet or more from the ground, which was reached by a

ladder, and there were ladders inside to climb from one floor to the next."

"What were the towers for?" asked Kathleen.

"They were built hundreds of years ago, in connection with the ancient churches, and were probably used as belfries, and also as a place of refuge for the monks," answered Deena.

"Are there many ruins in Ireland?" asked Mary Butler.

"Yes," replied Deena, "there are hundreds and hundreds of them. There is the 'Seven Churches of Kells,' over beyond Stonyford, for one, and the 'Seven Churches of Glendalough,' too. You should see the Round Tower at Glendalough."

"Connie is calling," interrupted Feena.

"Hurrah, lunch is ready!" shouted Columba, and they all clattered down the stone steps in a hurry.

The four baskets did hold a good deal after all, and the lunch looked so inviting, spread out on a white cloth in the shade of the big oak tree, that the ten hungry children made short work of it.

"Now let's go to the wishing spring," suggested Columba, taking a cookie in one hand and a pickle in the other, and starting off across the field.

"I wish you all good luck in your wishing, and I'll stay here in the shade to wish it the heartier,"

said his mother, taking out her knitting and making herself comfortable under the tree.

"And I wish you may not be hungry again for an hour," added Captain Conn, gathering up the empty plates and cups and putting them in the baskets.

"There's the spring," shouted Deena, as they turned into a little lane. "It's under that big tree in the edge of the woods."

"Come on, Feena," called Columba, "here's the cup. Take a good drink and wish for the moon."

"I shall do no such thing," replied his sister. "I shall wish for a book of fairy stories, and I shall get it, too, for Father promised it to me last night."

"I wish for a new knife," said Deena, as he took the cup.

"And Hannah and I want a pair of white gloves to wear with our new white dresses," said Anna, as she and her twin sister took their drink together.

"What is your wish, Kathleen?" asked Princess Feena.

"It is a very big wish," replied Kathleen, so soberly that everyone stopped laughing and became quiet in a moment. "It is bigger than a knife, or a book, or a pair of gloves. It is almost bigger than the moon. I'm wishing that little Mary Ellen could see."

"I wish it, too," said Hannah earnestly.

“And I!” “And I!” cried the others, gathering close around Kathleen as she knelt before the bubbling spring and filled the cup with the clear, cold water.

“Perhaps it will come true, then,” said Kathleen, “if we are all wishing so hard,” and she smiled bravely up at them through her tears, as she drank the very last drop of water in the cup.

CHAPTER XV

GOOD NEWS FROM COUSIN BEE

"HERE are two letters for you, Kathleen mavourneen," said her Uncle Tom, one morning about a week later, as the family were seated at the breakfast table.

"Two letters for me!" exclaimed Kathleen in surprise. "Perhaps one of them is from Father," and she jumped out of her chair and ran around the table to get them.

"It is, it is!" she cried, looking at one of the letters. "The postmark is Portrush in County Antrim, and that's near the Giant's Causeway."

"Open it, and see what it says, alanna," suggested her Aunt Hannah, as Kathleen continued to study the envelope; and all the ten young Malones stopped eating their breakfast, and turned eager eyes upon their cousin.

Kathleen opened the letter and read the first lines. "Oh, Feena," she said, looking up with shining eyes, "he did go to the wishing arch, and he wished for Mary Ellen's sight, just as I asked him to."

Then she read the rest of the letter while everyone waited. "Oh, Aunt Hannah!" she cried with de-

light, "Father says he is going on to the Giant's Causeway, and I'm to come up there to meet him, and then we'll go over to Tonroe to see Mary Ellen."

Never did so short a letter cause so much excitement. All the Malones began talking at once and no one stopped to listen to what any one was saying. Feena jumped up to put her arms around her cousin, crying, "Kathleen, darling, you'll never go away and leave me, will you?" Columba begged his father to let him go along with Kathleen to see that no harm came to her, and Danny repeated over and over that the child should go nowhere without himself to look after her.

When the chatter ceased for a moment, Aunt Hannah found a chance to say, "There were two letters, Kathleen. What's become of the other?"

Sure enough, the second letter had been forgotten, and all was still for a moment while Kathleen found it and looked at the postmark.

"It is from Cousin Bee," she said, and opened it quietly enough; but in a second she dropped it and ran to throw herself into her Aunt Hannah's arms. "Mary Ellen can see!" she cried; "Mary Ellen can see!"

Then, indeed, there was an uproar. Columba pounded on the table with his knife and fork, shouting, "Hurrah, I told you so! It was the wishing

spring that did it!" Feena danced around the room, clapping her hands and stopping at every turn to kiss Kathleen; Hannah and Anna hugged each other with delight; and little Victoria was so frightened that she clambered out of her high-chair and ran to Captain Conn to be comforted.

"Hush, children, hush!" commanded Captain Conn. "See what you've done now. You've made Victoria cry with all your noise. Be quiet while Danny reads the letter."

"Sure, it's not a long letter," said Danny; "but there's good news in every line of it," and he read it aloud while the Malones listened breathlessly.

"KATHLEEN DEAR:—" wrote Cousin Bee, "I've wonderful news for you,— so good that I don't know how to begin it. Mary Ellen can see. It's the truth that I'm writing. She can see as well as you can this minute.

"Patrick had the surgeon from the Boyle Hospital come over to see the child's eyes in the winter, and he said it was a shame that nothing had been done for them before. Since then Mary Ellen has been going to Boyle every market-day, and at the last she was two weeks in the hospital there.

"The doctor said it was n't the smoke of the peat after all, but something else which I don't understand; but he's cured it, praise be!

"Mary Ellen would n't let me tell you before, because she did n't want you to be disappointed if nothing came of it; but now she's sitting here beside me, looking at the words that will tell you the good news.

"We are all well and Patrick has a fine new heifer, but he says he'll not sell it to Tim Keefe if he has to give it away."

"It is wonderful news, indeed," said Uncle Tom.

"Our eyesight is a blessing we don't appreciate till we miss it."

"I wonder if Father knows about it," said Kathleen. "I'd like to be the first one to tell him."

"Perhaps you will be," said Columba. "When are you going to meet him?"

And then the talking began all over again, because everyone wanted to see Uncle Jerry when he heard the good news; everyone wanted to go to the Giant's Causeway; in fact, everyone wanted to start out and see the whole of Ireland that very morning.

"We'd go through Dublin," suggested Columba, "and I could see Trinity College, where I'm going to study some day."

"I would like to see the College Library," said Feena. "It is one of the five great libraries of the kingdom, and has a copy of every book that's published in Great Britain and Ireland."

"Dublin is a beautiful city," said Aunt Hannah. "There's plenty of fine sights I'd like to show you all. There's the River Liffey, and the canals, and Dublin Bay. Then there is St. Patrick's Cathedral that is named in honor of the good saint, and the Bank of Ireland, and Phoenix Park."

"There is O'Connell Street, too," added Captain Conn. "It's one of the widest streets in all Europe. I'd like to do some shopping there."



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O'CONNELL STREET (FORMERLY CALLED SACKVILLE STREET), DUBLIN
Notice the O'Connell Monument and the Nelson Pillar. *Page 102*

"We could see the O'Connell Monument and the Nelson Pillar in O'Connell Street," suggested Deena, "and we'd get a splendid view of the city from the top of the Pillar."

"Danny and I could stop at Belfast to see the linen mills," Tara said to his father. "You said only yesterday it was time we were going up there to learn the business."

"It is always easy to think of reasons for doing just what we want to be doing," replied his father, "but it is time now to be thinking of going to work. We will talk about the journey later when we have more time for it."

He must have found time to think of it during the day, and to talk it over with Aunt Hannah, too, for, wonder of wonders, before they went to bed that night it had been decided that Uncle Tom should take the whole family up to the North of Ireland the next week, to meet Uncle Jerry Barry, and to have a look at the Giant's Causeway.

CHAPTER XVI

THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY

"STAND still now, while I count you once more," directed Aunt Hannah, as they stood at the street corner in Portrush waiting for the electric tram-car to take them down to the Giant's Causeway.

"No matter how many times I count you, there's always one missing. Deena, look out for Columba. Kathleen, stand there by your brother;" and Mrs. Malone took Victoria firmly by the hand and gathered the children closer together lest one should stray away before they could all be safely settled in the car.

"Everyone looks at us as if they thought we were crazy," said Hannah. "Do you remember the man in Dublin who said, 'There's a big man with a big family'?"

"He was wishing himself in my place, I'm thinking," said her father with fond pride, as he looked over his rollicking brood; "and it takes a big family to see a big city, for everyone sees something different."

"We saw a good deal of Dublin for one day, even if Kathleen and Feena did get lost," said

Connie, taking Feena's hand to keep her from getting lost again.

"It was easy to get lost in O'Connell Street," replied Feena. "There were so many lovely things in the shop windows that I just thought I'd go inside to see more."

"Here comes the car," shouted Columba, and in a moment all the younger Malones were scrambling in, to get seats by the window, while the older ones followed more slowly.

"I wonder where Father is," Kathleen said, as the car ran along through the center of the little town. "I've looked for him everywhere this morning."

"Perhaps he will meet us at the Giant's Causeway," suggested Danny. "Uncle Tom wrote to him that we would be there to-day."

"Then we will be going over to see Mary Ellen to-morrow," said Kathleen with a little sigh of happiness, and she folded her hands in her lap and sat for a long time looking quietly out of the window.

"The sea! the sea!" cried Columba, as the car rounded a curve in the road, and there lay before them the blue waters of the Atlantic.

Immediately there was the greatest excitement among the children. "Think of our never having seen the ocean before!" exclaimed Feena, "and our little green island is all surrounded by it."

"Don't be calling your own country little," Deena reproved her. "Faith, we could whip the whole world before breakfast if we'd put our minds to it."

"There's the sea again," called Columba. "See how white the chalk cliffs look, where the sun is shining on them."

"There were chalk cliffs in Tonroe," Kathleen told him, "but they were not so high as those, and they didn't have such wonderful shapes."

"Look, Kathleen, do you see those men down there among the rocks gathering seaweed?" Danny asked. "That is the way I used to gather it for Farmer Flynn. See the big pile of it they have; and there is one man loading it into a cart."

"And look, Kathleen, there's a castle up there on the rocks," said Feena, turning to point out to her cousin the gray towers of an ancient castle perched high on a rugged cliff.

"That's Dunluce Castle," Uncle Tom told them. "It has stood there a long time, and could tell many a tale of old Irish wars."

"I'll tell you a tale about it now; it's easy to make up stories about castles like that," Feena whispered to Kathleen.

"There was once an Irish princess, as beautiful as the dawn," she began in a low voice, "and her father, the king, locked her up in one of those old

towers and set a dragon to guard her. A prince came riding by on a horse as black as night. He saw the princess standing at the tower window, looking out over the sea, and he fell in love with her sad, sweet face. So he rode down to the cave where the Witch of the Sea lived all alone, — ”

“ Here we are, at the end of our car ride,” her father interrupted. “ Now for a walk along the shore and a climb over the rocks of the Causeway.”

The Giant's Causeway is a low rocky pier which stretches out into the ocean about six hundred feet, gradually sinking below the waves. It is composed of about forty thousand upright stone columns which are fitted closely together, the cracks between them being very narrow but showing plainly the sides of each column.

Most of the columns have five, six, or seven sides; some have four or eight; a very few have nine; and there is one among the forty thousand which has only three sides.

“ It looks like the beginning of the world,” said Mrs. Malone, looking up at the enormous cliffs and out over the tremendous, swelling sea, — the big waves roaring and crashing among the black rocks. “ Those tall crags stand there as if they had been guarding the ocean for centuries.”

“ So they have,” replied her husband, “ and they guarded this part of our island from the golden-

haired tribes of the De Danaans, when they came sailing across the sea from the north some four thousand years ago. These great cliffs offered no shelter and they had to sail west or south to find a landing-place."

"Four thousand years ago," repeated Kathleen. "Were there men living in Ireland as long ago as that?"

"Yes," replied her uncle, "and Ireland was as pleasant a place to live in then as it is now. It was a land of forests, echoing in spring and summer to the songs of the birds. Wild cattle, deer and wolves roamed through the dense woods. Everywhere in the deep forests were blue lakes and silver rivers teeming with trout and salmon; and the seas beat restlessly against the coast, while flocks of white gulls sailed peacefully between the blue of the sky and the blue of the sea."

"It is easy to believe that this Causeway was built by a giant," said Columba, who had been climbing over the rocks, and came back now to sit down beside his father.

"Was it really?" asked Kathleen.

"Of course it was," replied her cousin. "Tell her about it, Father. She likes stories of giants."

"I'll tell her the truth first," said his father, "and that is that the Causeway and all these black cliffs were made by a volcano which poured out hot lava

over this part of the coast thousands of years ago. The lava cooled and cracked into these wonderful shapes, — the Giant's Causeway, the Giant's Spectacles, the Giant's Organ — and now it is one of the great sights of Ireland, which hundreds of tourists come every year to see.

“ But the people of old Ireland liked to tell strange tales of the rocks and mountains and so they made up the story of Finn MacCool.

“ Finn MacCool was a giant who lived up here in the north of Ireland, and as strong and powerful a giant as you 'd wish to see. He 'd take a thunder-bolt and flatten it out like a pancake, or pull up a pine tree and lop off the roots and branches to make himself a walking-stick; and he was so strong that he had whipped every other giant in the country who was willing to fight with him.

“ Over there where you see the blue hills of Scotland lived a Scotch giant, and one day he shouted out to Finn that he 'd come over and whip him with one hand if he could only cross the ocean without wetting his feet.

“ That very night Finn MacCool set to work to build this causeway of rock straight across the sea to the coast of Scotland; and when it was finished the Scotch giant came over the sea dry-shod, while Finn played a tune on his organ for him to cross to the sound of music.

"Then there was the greatest wrestling match the world ever saw; but Finn had the best of it from the start, and sent the Scotchman home to a different tune.

"Some say that Finn pushed part of the Causeway under the waves so that the giant had to swim home; and you can see for yourself that it seems to sink under the water out there.

"There is a bit of it left on the coast of Scotland, too," he added with a laugh.

"It is a good story, even if it is n't true," said Columba.

"It sounds true," said Kathleen. "Do you know any more stories about Finn MacCool, Uncle Tom?"

"One or two," replied her uncle, "but I can't tell them to you now. Run and find your Aunt Hannah and the children, and we'll all go and take a look at the Giant's Organ."

Kathleen started off at once to find her Aunt Hannah, and as she climbed over the rocks she saw so many bright-eyed pinks that she stopped to gather a handful.

"What's that you are doing, Kathleen?" asked a familiar voice, and she looked up quickly to find her father standing beside her.

"Oh, Father!" she cried, throwing her arms around him, "I was hoping that I would find you



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THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY

"See that little girl out there on the rocks with the big dog beside her."

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down here. I have such good news to tell you!"

"It's good news that you're here, Kathleen mavourneen," replied her father, giving her a hearty kiss.

"But it is much better than that," said Kathleen. "Mary Ellen can see. Cousin Bee wrote to me about it."

"So she can," said her father, "and a great blessing it is to the dear child."

"You knew it all the time!" exclaimed Kathleen, "and I thought it was a secret. Who told you? Did Cousin Bee write to you, too?"

"Perhaps she did," her father answered; and then, looking out across the Causeway, he added, "See that little girl out there on the rocks with the big dog beside her. Do you think it is safe for her to be there all alone? Go and tell her that she'd better come up here with you."

"Uncle Tom sent me to find Aunt Hannah and the children," said Kathleen. "I think they are over there on the sand looking for sea-shells."

"I'll go down and speak to them," her father said, "and we will all come back and meet you."

So Kathleen clambered out over the rocky pier, stopping every few minutes to see if the little girl were still safe.

"She looks like Mary Ellen, only bigger," she

said to herself, as she came nearer and saw the child's yellow curls.

Just then the little girl began singing in a sweet soft voice, "How many miles to Dublin Town?" and Kathleen knew at once that it was Mary Ellen herself, singing for happiness the little song they used to sing together in Donegal.

"Mary Ellen!" she called; "Mary Ellen!"

And the little sister turned and held out her arms, crying, "I hear you, Kathleen; I'd know your voice anywhere. But, best of all, I can see you now."

Such a hugging and laughing and chattering as there was then. Kathleen had to tell Mary Ellen all about Kilkenny and the Malones, and Mary Ellen had to tell Kathleen about the doctor and the hospital and Cousin Bee.

"And she brought me up here to meet you and Father," she said.

"Who did?" asked Kathleen.

"Cousin Bee, of course," replied her sister; "and she and Father are planning that we will all live in Tonroe next year, and you and I are both going to school there. Father is to have the little farm next to Cousin Patrick's, and we are going to have two little donkeys for our very own."

"Kathleen," shouted Columba, "we are going over to the wishing chair. Father says he wants

to wish that we'll all get home without getting lost again."

"Yes," answered Kathleen, and she took her sister's hand to lead her back over the rocks.

"You won't have to lead me any more," said Mary Ellen.

"That's so, darling; but I'll be forgetting it all the time at first," replied Kathleen.

"Tallyho-o-o for the wishing chair!" called Columba again.

"Yes," answered Kathleen, "we're coming." Then she looked lovingly at her little sister and added, "But I've nothing to wish for now that Mary Ellen can see."

THE
MUSIC
OF
THE
MIDDLE
AGES

VOCABULARY

à làn'nă, my dear.

Ān'trīm, a county in northeastern Ireland.

à vīc', my son.

Běl fāst', a city in northeastern Ireland.

bē līke', probably ; perhaps.

bīde, dwell ; stay.

blăck'thōrn, a kind of hawthorn, bearing little black plums called sloes. Strong sticks are made from the branches.

blār'neŷ, flattery ; smooth, wheedling talk.

bō rēen', a little lane.

Břī'ân Bô ru' (rōō), king of Ireland, 1002-1014.

chīl'dēr, children.

cōl lēen', lass ; girl.

Cô lūm'bă, a saint's name.

Cōn nê mă'ră, a name.

crēel, a wicker basket.

Croagh (crōg), a hill.

Crōm'wēll, Oliver. Lord Protector of the English Commonwealth, 1653-1658.

Dăg'dă, an Irish god.

Dī cho (dē' kō), an Irish chief.

Dōn ẽ gāl', a county in northwestern Ireland.

Dŭb'lin, the capital of Ireland.

dũn, a king's dwelling in ancient Ireland.

E'rĩn, Ireland.

fēar'sòme, causing fear ; timid ; easily frightened.

Fí'ò nà, an Irish princess.

fôr nĩnst', opposite.

frieze (frēz), coarse woolen cloth.

Gāel'íc, the language of the Gael, used in Scotland and Ireland.

Gal'wāy, a county in west Ireland.

Glēn dá'lough (lōch), a group of famous ruins of churches and monasteries.

gōs sōon', boy ; lad.

hā''pēn nỹ, a half-penny.

hāy-hăg'gard (gērd), a stackyard for hay.

hĩl lēēn', little hill.

hĩg'gle, to bargain ; to haggle.

Hōrn Hēad, a rocky promontory on the northwestern coast of Ireland.

jäunt'ing-cār, a two-wheeled vehicle used in Ireland.

Jēr'point Āb'beỹ, a ruined church and monastery in County Kilkenny.

Kĩl kēn'nỹ, the name of a city and county in the south of Ireland.

Kĩl lá'raght (rât), a village near Boyle.

Lein'stēr (lēn), the southeastern province of Ireland.

lěp'rě caun (kạn), a fairy shoemaker.

Lět'tēr kēn'nỹ, a town in County Donegal.

Lĩf'feỹ, the river on which Dublin is situated.

Lough Gă' ră (lōch), a lake in County Sligo.

Mác Cōol', Finn, an Irish giant.

Māive, queen of West Ireland about 2000 years ago.

má vour'nēen, darling.

Nēl'son, Horatio, an English admiral, 1758-1805.

Ō Cōn'nēll, Daniel, Ireland's silver-tongued orator and "liberator."

Og'ham (ög' âm), a kind of writing used in ancient Ireland.

pēat, a vegetable substance of roots, fibres, moss, etc., dried and used for fuel.

Pōrt rūsh', a town in County Antrim.

pound, British money equal in value to about \$4.86.

Quēens'town, a seaport in southern Ireland.

rāth, a mound or hill.

rēd, make tidy ; put in order.

Rōs cōm'mōn, a county in west Ireland.

St. Brid get (brīj'ēt), a patron saint of Ireland, died 523.

St. Cān'ice (īs), a saint for whom an ancient church in Kilkenny is named.

St. Cō lūm'bá, an Irish saint, died 597.

St. Cōl'ūmb kille, same as St. Columba.

St. Kī'ēr ān, a saint for whom the college in Kilkenny is named.

St. Pāt'rīck, the patron saint of Ireland, died March 17, about 465 A. D.

shām'rōck, a three-leaved plant ; the national emblem of Ireland.

shīl lā'lāh, a cudgel.

shīl'līng, a silver coin equal to about 24 cents.

Slí'gō, a county in northwestern Ireland.

spāl'pēen, good-for-nothing fellow.

stīr'ā bout, oatmeal boiled in water.

Tā'rā, a hill near Dublin, where the high-kings of ancient Ireland lived.

thătch, straw, rushes or the like, used for a roof.

Tō'bār N'alt', a holy well in County Sligo.

Tōn rōe', a village near Boyle in County Sligo.

whist (hwist), hush ; be still.





